

WHAT HIS LOVE MEANT

LONG NOVEL
INSIDE

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EVERY SATURDAY



PASSIONATE NEW SERIAL BEGINS INSIDE

WHAT HIS LOVE MEANT

(Continued from page 35.)

you the truth—because you've bitterly misjudged Geoff."

Cynthia stood gazing at her—listening—without saying a word. But beneath the slightly bored mask of her beautiful face, her brain was seething with amazement and exultation!

For Cynthia's ambitious schemes had come to nothing. Her titled admirer, after a few weeks of devoted and flattering attentions, had suddenly gone abroad on a long tour—without proposing! And Cynthia, deep in debt and difficulty, was at her wits' end, utterly despairing of ever getting Geoff back!

Now, the most wonderful stroke of fate had sent this girl here with her confession! Poor little fool!

She smiled sweetly into Gillie's white face. Her overwhelming relief and triumph made her manner quite gracious.

"It was most awfully sporting of you to come and tell me!" she murmured, dabbing her eyes with a trifle of perfumed georgette. "I've been absolutely heartbroken over the quarrel with Geoff. But he's so wonderful—so chivalrous, isn't he? We can make it up, now!"

"Yes," Gillie repeated steadily. "You can make it up."

Outside the hotel again, in the dazzling sunshine of the promenade, she stood a moment, dazed—realising what she had done!

She had given Geoff up to that other girl! It was Cynthia he cared for! He had never really loved her—Gillie!

She pressed her hand to her heart. It felt as though it was being torn out by the roots. Then, turning away from the holiday crowds, the gay music, the light-hearted bathers whose joyous laughter and chaff seemed to mock her, she went back to her room and wrote a short note to Geoff.

Our engagement was a mistake. There is such a big difference between us, that we shouldn't have been happy (ran the pitiful, brave lies). You'll be much happier with a girl of your own class. But I'll never forget how kind and wonderful you've been to me. Good-bye.—GILLIE.

Good-bye!

During the three dragging days that followed, that word rang like a knell through Gillie's brain, while quickly, desperately she made arrangements to leave Cliff Bay. She must go away at once. She mustn't see Geoff again!

Yet on the evening that Geoff was to return, Gillie's heart-hunger sent her stealing along the cliff-path to Geoff's bungalow. Unseen, she might catch one glimpse of him, before she went away, next morning.

Geoff's car was outside the gate when she reached it, and from the open sitting-room window came the murmur of voices. He had come back! Noiselessly she crept up the flower-bordered path—then stopped short while her heart seemed to stop beating.

In the middle of the sitting-room two people were standing—Geoff and Cynthia. Cynthia's arms were clasped round his neck and she was speaking in low, passionate tones.

"Geoff! Oh, my dear! I know all the truth now and I've come back to you! My feelings have never really altered!"

"No!" came Geoff's deep, deliberate voice. "Your feelings have never really altered, Cynthia. I know that."

Blindly, Gillie moved away. She had heard enough.

Geoff and Cynthia had come together again! She was not wanted!

With fiercely aching heart, she stumbled down to the seashore and wandered aimlessly about the moonlit sands fighting with her pain, not knowing or caring how time passed! And then suddenly a familiar voice close beside her sent all the blood ebbing from her face.

"Gillie, where have you been? Why have you hidden yourself?"

It was Geoff—speaking in a tenderly masterful way, slipping his arm possessively through hers, as she stood mute!

"I came back two hours ago and found your note!" he hurried on. "I've been to your lodgings and have hunted everywhere for you! What d'you mean by writing me a crazy note like that? What's this fool talk about a mistake?"

The nearness and the dearness of him almost broke the girl down. Oh, it was so much harder having to explain like this! Having to send him from her, when she longed to feel his arms about her—his kisses!

"It has all been a mistake!" she stammered through shaking lips. "Cynthia Deane, the girl you were engaged to, knows all the truth now—about that night! I told her. And you still love each other. I saw you—through your bungalow window. I heard her saying her feelings had never changed."

Her brave voice failed.

And with a swift, tender laugh, Geoff swept her into his arms.

"That's true enough!" he declared. "Cynthia's feelings have never changed—because she never loved me. It was only my money she wanted. I found that out after she'd turned me down. Found out she was angling for a richer man with a title. But now—"

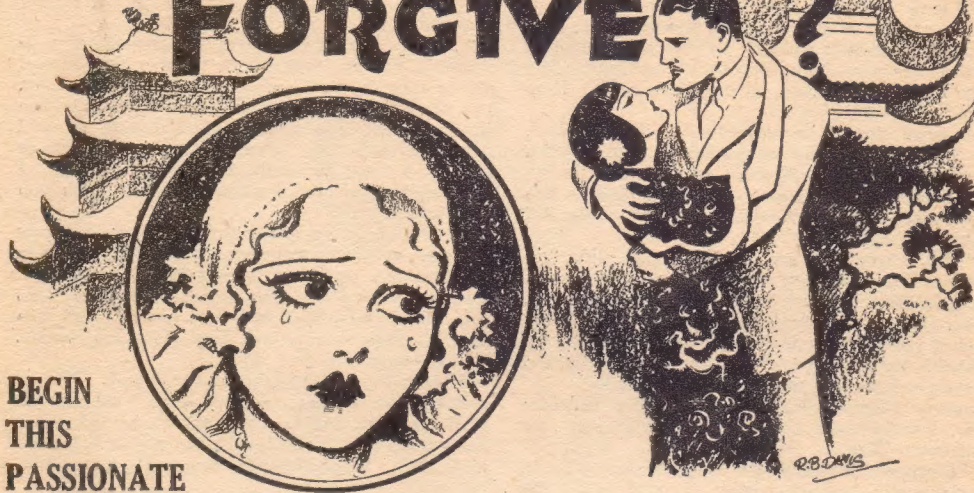
His strong arms locked her close while his voice dropped to a tender, passionate whisper:

"Gillie, it's you I want—you I love, and I won't let you go! My darling, my loyal little pal! You're going to marry me as soon as it can be fixed, sweetheart, and we're going out to my ranch for our honeymoon! Say 'Yes'!"

But Gillie couldn't speak for the moment. Everything had suddenly become so glorious, so wonderful that she could hardly bear it! But her arms slipped up to his neck, and with her soft, vivid lips returning his kisses, they stood there, while the sea murmured along the sands like a song of happiness!

"SECRET LOVERS" is the intriguing title of next week's complete long novel. It tells of a girl who had to keep her love a complete secret . . . who dare not admit that she loved! Do not miss it. Order Next Saturday's "Betty's Paper" from your Newsagent.

SHOULD A BRIDE FORGIVE?



**BEGIN
THIS
PASSIONATE
NEW
ROMANCE
HERE!**

FROM Tom White's bedroom there came the sound of a woman's soft voice, followed by a thin ripple of laughter. Then the deeper note of Tom's voice, and silence.

Marcelle held her breath, and for a moment stood shivering in the middle of the cool, darkened room. So all her forebodings about Tom were right. There was another woman, perhaps other women.

Outside in the glaring sunshine, Hong Kong, vital, alive, superbly beautiful, seemed more a thing of joy and light than ever; here in the darkness of Tom's sitting-room everything was dead and tragic.

Marcelle was turning away, bruised and disgusted and disillusioned, but at that moment the door into Tom's bedroom opened.

"Good God, Marcelle! You!"

"Yes, Tom!"

She stood, a gold-headed girl, lovely as a picture, but now as white as paper, with her back to the wall, waiting for the lies which she knew were bound to come.

**HERE is a story
with a problem
every girl will under-
stand! What should
a young bride-to-be**

**do, when, having
travelled thousands
of miles to marry
the man she loves,
she finds him
changed, dissolute,
worthless; that
there have been
other women in
his life?**

by
**Madge
Crichton**

Her whole world was being swept from beneath her that morning. She looked at the man she had loved—and hated him. Clad in a silk dressing-gown, he stood before her, guilty and afraid.

"What on earth are you doing up here, Marcelle? I told them to ask you to wait downstairs."

Tom White looked haggard and worn, as a man can only look when he has been "going the pace"

East of Suez. The dark lines under his eyes told their tale; the nervous gestures of the hands;

**The problem was
solved for this
bride swiftly—
strangely—
startlingly!**

All the characters in the stories printed in this paper are fictitious. The names do not refer to any living person or persons.

No. 506—July 30, 1932.

OUT EVERY SATURDAY.

the beads of perspiration on his brow; and then the sudden movement towards the decanter of whisky on the sideboard—all told the same pitiful story.

A certain pity filled Marcelle's heart as she watched the shaking hand pour out a drink. She had loved Tom well enough to come all the way from England to marry him.

"I grew tired of waiting, Tom," she said. "They said that you would only be five minutes, and nearly half-an-hour passed. In your note you said that it was very important that I got here right after breakfast, to start on our drive early. Here I am."

"I know, dear—I'm a lazy devil," Tom laughed. He was regaining his composure a little. With a gesture he waved Marcelle to a chair. He set the electric punka swinging. Little by little he was becoming Tom White again, and not a startled craven.

"Yes, there you are, darling," he said, "as lovely as ever. Forgive me if I was a bit brusque a moment ago. But you know what Hong Kong is, although you've only been here a week or two. Perfect young ladies don't come up to men's rooms—at this time of day! And I must be very careful of the good name of my little bride-to-be."

Slowly Marcelle looked towards the bedroom door, leading from the room in which she now confronted Tom.

"I suppose that the ladies who do come up to men's rooms are not perfect then, Tom?" she asked in a low voice.

For a moment there was silence. Then with a cry Tom White slipped to his feet.

"What do you mean, Marcelle?"

She pointed. "I heard a woman's voice in there," she began. "No—no, don't touch me!" She drew back, trembling passionately. "I'm glad I know the truth, Tom, *glad!*"

"Don't be a fool, Marcelle. You heard no one." "You lie!"

Warned Against The Man She Was To Marry.

SHE was standing with her back to the door again, her wonderfully blue eyes blazing with misery, her lips quivering, her hands held in front of her, a shield as against an unworthy thing.

Never, probably, had Marcelle Lang looked so lovely to the man who had cheated, never so desirable, as into the heart of Tom White at that moment there came the bitter knowledge that he had lost the finest thing on earth.

"Don't be a little idiot, Marcelle," he cried, feigning indignation. "You burst up into my flat, hear all sorts of imaginary voices, and accuse me of dreadful things. The heat's getting you, dear. That's what it is. Come along, enough of this, sweetheart. I'll dress and we'll be off in no time for a wonderful day in the car. I have a great deal to say to you this morning."

But Marcelle did not move. She stood there watching the man with cold misery in her eyes.

"You can say what you have got to say here,

Tom. Then I am going. You—you have broken my heart."

"Marcelle!"

"There *was* a woman in there, and you know it! Oh, I suppose I've got no right to ask too much of you before I am your wife, but it hurts, it is beastly. And it is not all, Tom. I reached Hong Kong a fortnight ago. I loved you then. I'd dreamed of the East and of our marriage. But I found you utterly changed."

"I began little by little to realise that the man to whom I became engaged in London had turned into a very different man. I hate to say it, Tom, but you are different. The way you drink. Then the gambling. I've seen people watching me, and feeling sorry for me. I've felt their pity. One or two have tried to warn me—and now, Tom, I *know* that there was a woman in there with you just now."

"Oh, it's all so dreadful. I had such lovely dreams. It was so wonderful to leave the office in London, the drudgery of shorthand-typing, and to come out to this dreamland to be your wife. And now to find that you—you are this sort of a man." She covered her face with her hands. "Tom—what am I to do?"

Tom White stood staring at her aghast. He had indeed been making a fool of himself for months in Hong Kong, and he was conscious that everyone knew it. But he had thought he could pull himself up in time. When Marcelle came out to marry him, he would settle down.

Now Marcelle had come, and it was more difficult than he had imagined to give up the cocktails and the races, the cards and the club, the picnics to questionable resorts on the Yangtse-Kiang, the kind of girls who laughed and helped a man to forget his follies.

But now he had come to his senses. He knew that every man in Hong Kong envied him Marcelle. True she had been working humbly as a typist in a City office when he had met her on his last leave; but for all that she was as beautiful as a dream. Everyone admired and liked her. She was so simple, so eager, and so exquisitely beautiful. No wonder as she moved through the teeming streets of Hong Kong all men, and women, too, turned to look upon the fair English girl. And he was throwing her away for a lot of folly!

He suddenly flung himself down into a chair and covered his pale face with his hands. A sob shook him.

"I'm sorry, Marcelle," he muttered. "Sit down and listen for a moment. I think you'll understand and forgive."

Marcelle frowned. She did not want to forgive. Something told her that it was useless. Her woman's instinct told her that this was the *real* Tom White, and that the charming man she had known in London was but a make-believe figure.

Yet she was touched at the picture of his despair. She sank into a chair opposite him, while the silence of the darkened room was broken only by the steady purr of the punka and the cries from the Oriental street below.

Tom looked up.

"Marcelle," he began, "it's the East. It gets

into a fellow's blood. That—and the curse of being alone. I swear to you that I'm going to pull up. You're a girl, and you can't quite understand. But that," he waved his hand towards the bedroom door, "that is nothing. Nor is the drink, or the cards. I'm going to settle down. Why, I only got my promotion last month; and when we are married I'll be the steadiest fellow alive. Don't doubt me, Marcelle, ask anyone who knows the East."

The pity grew in Marcelle's heart.

"If I could only be sure, Tom," she said. "I want to be fair to you, but you've changed so." She looked at him straight in the eyes. "Tom, someone told me only yesterday that a month ago you all but lost your job at the bank. Is that true?"

He nodded uneasily.

"Quite true. I'm not going to lie, dear. Old Mostyn got fed up with me, and it was touch and go. Then you arrived, and he was so pleased with you that he passed my promotion." He sprang to his feet and gripped her hands tight. "I swear to you that if you will stick to me, if you will give me this chance, I will settle down."

Marcelle avoided his eyes for a moment or two. A struggle almost impossibly cruel was taking place in her heart. Instinct told her not to trust him. She had been disillusioned, and she now knew the real Tom White.

But pity for him, and self-pity, also tempted her. She knew just enough of the East to realise that a man on his own must always find it difficult to avoid temptation.

And then again herself. Must she go back to London again; to the drab life in the back room which her aunt begrudged her; to her typing, to crowded tubes and buses, to the humdrum office life? Must she go back to that, and leave behind her all the throbbing, pulsating dream of China? She couldn't! Suddenly she reached up, and slipped her arms about his neck.

"Be good to me, Tom," she whispered, as her

sweetheart's arms enfolded her. "Keep other women out of your life. I simply couldn't stand that!"

"Darling, oh, darling, of course I will. I swear I've been a fool—but that sort of thing is finished for ever."

He got no further, for at that moment the door leading into the bedroom was thrown open, and a dark-haired girl suddenly appeared.

"I say, Tom," she exclaimed, "are you ever—Oh, I—I'm sorry!"

She drew back, stared a moment longer, and then slammed the door.

Tom looked at Marcelle anxiously.

"I'm sorry, dear," he said. "She—she is nothing, poor little devil. Nobody. I'll never see her again. Can you understand and forgive, or has that little idiot spoiled it all?"

Marcelle stood very still. She knew inwardly that all was indeed spoiled for ever. But she was determined to try and forgive.

"I have promised, Tom," she whispered, "and I will keep my promise. But please take me away from here as quickly as you can!"

"I will give you an extra three weeks in which to get to know everyone in Hong Kong, darling, and to feel more certain than ever that I have turned over a new leaf and mean to prove myself worthy of the dearest little girl in the world. I shall only be away from Hong Kong a fortnight, and Mrs. Lister has promised me that she will look after you."

Marcelle nodded.

Tom and she were sitting out a dance a few evenings later at the club.

The dark Eastern night hung over them like a dream. Never had the girl known anything so perfect,

so rich in passionate promise as this Chinese night. The jewelled sky, the thousand painted paper lanterns its contrast, all swaying languorously in the soft breeze; the heavy scent of a myriad blooms; lilies of every Heaven-dreamed hue, loquat, and roses.



She had no right to let the man she loved kiss her. She was promised to another man!



"You will welcome death," Li Chu said, "before I set you free!"

Why, oh why, were men so cruel when a girl loved them most?

"Please—for my sake," she said.

She saw the blood mount into his face. She saw the brave struggle in his blue eyes.

"All right, let us go and dance," he said, and offered her his arm.

She placed her trembling fingers upon it, and they moved slowly, silently through the heavily scented Chinese garden towards the ballroom.

It was the first time they had ever danced together. His arms were about her. They danced. They could not speak. The passion of the music mocked at their misery. In it was laughter and tears, in it was sorrow and endless longing—and to that endless longing they danced together, too late.

"I am a cad," Dick said suddenly. "All my life I've tried to be a white man, and now I'm just a cad. I—I love you—and you belong to another man."

Marcelle looked at him miserably.

"Please don't speak like that," she said.

"Why?"

"Because—I can't bear it, Dick!"

He nodded. Their eyes met and held again. "I won't speak like that again. You are determined to marry Tom White?"

"Of course!"

"They say that he is not good enough for you, Marcelle. Oh, my God, as though any man could

be good enough for you!" He laughed a little wildly and held her a little closer.

And they danced, closer to one another than they could ever hope to be in all their lives again; silent though their hearts were breaking; glad, at all events, for their one small hour.

"I'm going to sea to-morrow," Dick said suddenly. "I shall probably be away for weeks. You'll be married before I get back to Hong Kong again, Marcelle. I shall think of you all the time."

She looked at him.

"I shall think of you, Dick," she whispered. "And now, please, be kind and help me. There is Tom over there, alone, watching us. It is his dance—now. Take me to him—and don't come back again."

"I will not come back again," said Dick in a low voice, "but I shall never forget—never!"

They stopped dancing, and he took Marcelle back to Tom, who was not looking too pleased. A few words were exchanged and then Dick made an excuse and turned away. For a moment Marcelle could not take her eyes from him. Tom was speaking to her, but she did not hear a word he was saying.

Dick was going from her. Dick who had come into her life too late. Dick whom everyone adored, the finest, straightest man alive. She would marry Tom, and she would try to be good to him and happy with him, but as long as she lived she would remember the man who had loved her, taught her to love, and been man enough to give her up.

If only they had met before it was too late!

(Continued on page 26.)

What His

Our
Complete
Long
Novel.



"PERHAPS I don't look so bad after all," Gillie Brooke told herself hopefully. "The frock's pretty, for all it came out of a bargain-basement! And men don't think much about whether a thing's cheap, so long as it looks all right."

But there was a wistful expression in her dark-blue eyes as she turned this way and that before the strip of looking-glass in her tiny, seaside bedroom, trying to get a good view of her slim figure in the flimsy, green dance-frock!

It was certainly becoming enough, for the soft colour brought out the red-gold lights in Gillie's mop of brown curls, and intensified the vivid warmth of her lips and cheeks.

But would it pass muster with fastidious Ralph Stanway, who would be here in his car, directly, to take her out for the most wonderful evening in her life?

Standing there, before the little cracked mirror, Gillie thrilled at the thought of it—thrilled again at the memory of how handsome, wealthy Ralph Stanway had come into her life just a week ago!

Their first meeting had been pure chance—or so Gillie thought.

She had got a job in a beach kiosk down here at Cliff Bay. And wandering along the promenade one evening, feeling very lonely and "down"—for she didn't know a soul in the place—Gillie had not noticed her handbag slip from under her arm.

Ralph Stanway, handsome and attractive, had smilingly restored it to her, and strolled along beside her afterwards, talking easily as though it was the most natural thing in the world. And though Gillie had made it a rule not to let strangers address her, Ralph was so pleasant and attractive, and she was feeling so desperately lonely, that somehow she forgot to remonstrate with him.

Besides, there was a holiday feeling in the moonlit sea air. . . .

Somehow she had found herself telling him about her job at the cigarette kiosk, and being by herself and feeling rather lonely. And Ralph had confided that he was alone, too.

"It's rotten to be on your own at the seaside, and I've been awfully fed up!" he had declared

To
Him

. . . it was
an idle hour's
amusement,
with a lovely
working-class
girl whom he
meant to dazzle and
sweep off her feet with
a show of luxury.

Over there, in a lotus pond where the lilies lazed, the silver tinkle of a fountain; in the distance the even softer melody of a band to which they ought to be dancing. Marcelle could catch a magic glimpse now and again of the crowded harbour, a fairyland by night, where sampans pushed their silent ways across the waters, where the rickshaws jostled along the Bund, and life never stilled its throbbing for a single sleeping second.

"Yes, Mrs. Lister will look after me," she murmured, scarcely knowing what she said.

Marcelle was living with Fred Lister and his charming little wife, prior to her marriage to Tom. Lister himself had known her father slightly in England some years before, and as soon as the lonely girl had arrived in Hong Kong, they being friends of Tom's and the souls of generous hospitality, had offered her their friendship and their home—until her wedding-day. Jolly, unaffected people of middle years, they had taken the girl to their hearts at once.

Tom nodded quickly. There was an anxious expression in his eyes which in the darkness Marcelle could not see.

"It's very important for me to see this fellow, Li Chu, before long," he explained. "I was at Oxford with him, and I have never seen him since I came to China. He's one of the greatest mandarins in the country, and rich beyond the dreams of avarice. I'm going to ask him point-blank if he knows of anything, any job where I could double my money. Old Mostyn is a nice old chap, but promotion is mighty slow in his bank, and I must think of the future now!"

He did not trouble to add that it was absolutely necessary for him to borrow a large sum of money—quickly! He was desperate, and his voice betrayed him a little.

Marcelle said nothing. She sat very still, listening, and she knew somehow that Tom was not telling her quite the truth. She moved restlessly. He had some reason she did not understand for this visit to Li Chu, this postponing their wedding. He was putting her off with excuses. The blood crept up into her cheeks. For, at that moment, there came into her mind the thought of someone else. A man she had met within the last few weeks, someone who would have told her *all* the truth—always.

"You're very silent," exclaimed Tom, not too graciously.

The girl flushed at the tone.

"I'm sorry, Tom. I was only thinking that you ought not to be ungrateful to Mr. Mostyn. Remember that Samuel Mostyn is the biggest private banker in China, and has been kind to you."

"Curse Sam Mostyn," cried Tom, "he's a niggardly old brute!"

The tone told its own tale of unreason and secret anxiety.

"Anyhow," he said, "I know Li Chu. He won't let me down." He stood up, determined to close such a dangerous topic. "I've asked the General's wife for this dance, my dear. I must go and find the old hag, I suppose. Coming?"

Marcelle did not move.

"No, Tom, let me stay here. The night is so perfect."

Tom laughed shortly.

"Oh, all right. I'll find you after this dance; And don't go and misunderstand my putting the wedding off a few weeks. I've got to think of the money!"

She Had No Right to Listen to His Words of Love!

MARCELLE frowned.

She was uneasy. Tom had been far too casual about it all. He didn't seem to understand that no girl cares to have her wedding postponed unless the reason is vital beyond all question. And a visit up the Yangtse-Kiang to a Chinese mandarin friend did not seem to Marcelle at all vital.

No, Tom was disappointing her cruelly. She couldn't trust him. Why was he going away like this? What was he hiding from her?

She closed her eyes for a moment, as she sat thus alone, struggling with her growing bitterness.

The music of the water in the lotus pond soothed her. From out the silence a voice suddenly spoke her name:

"Marcelle!"

She sprang to her feet, her heart throbbing; breathless. A man, in speckless white, was standing in front of her. Their eyes met—in growing wonder.

"Dick!" she whispered.

"I thought I would never find you, to-night," he said. His voice was deep and fascinating; "You've hidden yourself so well."

"I—I was sitting here loving the night, it is so perfect," whispered the girl, trying to speak calmly; But her voice trembled.

"May I sit with you, Marcelle?" asked Dick Bryce.

Again their eyes met. Neither dared to speak for a moment. They both understood so overwhelmingly well what had happened to them in the last two weeks, and were both so very conscious that nothing could ever come of it. Yet this secret, stolen joy was theirs—completely, though no words of theirs should ever speak its sweetness.

Dick Bryce was a Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Navy, and had met Marcelle a fortnight before. They had been attracted to one another from the first instant, and although she had done her best to put such dangerous thoughts behind her, Marcelle already knew that she cared too much.

"May I sit down?" he asked again, softly.

Marcelle unconsciously glanced towards the ball-room.

"We'd better go and dance," she said, without moving.

"Oh, no. Let's sit here. I've so much to say to you, Marcelle!"

She shook her head. Her heart was beating wildly.

"We'd better dance," she said again.

"Why?"

Mutely, miserably she turned her eyes to him.

Love Meant

by

Helen
Clifton



lightly. "Why not be a little pal, and let's go about together. I'll give you a lovely time!"

Romance and adventure beckoning! Handsome eyes smiling into hers! Gillie had never had a lovely time in all her hard-working young life. And she longed for it like any other girl.

After all—why not? Where was the harm!

So she had thrilled, hesitated—and agreed. During the past week she had been to a theatre, the pictures, and for a bathing-picnic on her free afternoon. And this evening, Ralph was driving her to a gay dance-club some way along the coast.

The girl's heart was throbbing, her lovely eyes shining with excitement, as she put the last touches to her frock. She didn't ask herself

**To
Her**

... it was a wonderful dream of love and romance. She pictured herself as his bride, never dreaming that he already had a wife.

whether she was in love with Ralph Stanway. He was young, handsome, attractive. He thrilled and fascinated her. And it was wonderful that he, a gentleman, should choose her, a working-class girl, out of

all the smart crowd at Cliff Bay, to be his friend!

THE sudden stopping of a car in the street below broke through her thoughts. Catching up her bag, the girl ran down the stairs and out of the house.

Ralph was there, sitting at the wheel of his car, perfectly groomed, a cigarette between his lips. He smiled at Gillie as she emerged.

"There you are!" he greeted her gaily. But his handsome eyes swept a critical glance over her cheap little coat and pull-on cap. And the hot, sensitive blood surged into Gillie's face.

"I know I'm not—dressed right," she stammered. "Will they be very smart at the club?"

"Oh, they're a mixed crowd!" Ralph explained carelessly. But as he helped her into the car, his hand lingered in caressing fashion on her arm.

"Why didn't you tell me you wanted a frock?" he asked softly. "I'd have loved to give you one!"

Gillie drew back, startled. For the first time she was aware of a tiny feeling of uneasiness.

"Oh, no!" she said in her frank, direct way. "You've been awfully kind and given me a wonderful time, but I couldn't take anything of that sort."

Ralph laughed.

"Why not—independent little kid! Don't you know that I'd like nothing better than to give you everything you want! Pretty things, good times! Never mind the frock though! You're lovely,

whatever you wear! There'll be no one there to touch you to-night, Gillie!"

His voice dropped on the last words, his shoulder rested against hers as they glided down the narrow, shabby street and out on to the front. And again that wave of joyous excitement thrilled through Gillie!

Life was so wonderful just now! The sea looked like silver in the moonlight! And here was she, Gillie Brooke, driving along in a smart car with a handsome companion, going to dance at a night-club!

So the girl banished that tiny feeling of uneasiness, and gave herself up to the joy of the moment, gazing about with fascinated eyes at the beauty of the moonlit scene as the car sped along the winding coast-path.

But the thoughts of the man beside her were very different.

Bored, utterly unprincipled, and an expert in love-affairs, Gillie's fresh, vital loveliness had appealed to Ralph Stanway irresistibly. And from the first evening he had seen her, wandering along the promenade alone, he had coveted her and meant to know her!

The accidental dropping of her bag had given him his opportunity. And since then he had made the most of his chances. He had been very tactful and patient—careful not to scare her by any ardent love-making.

But to-night he meant to dazzle this beautiful girl of the working-class with pictures of what he could give her! Luxurious surroundings, jewels, lovely frocks! He meant to sweep her off her feet! To-night—Ralph's eyes gleamed in the darkness—he would have his reward for his patience and tact!

It took well over an hour to reach the dance-club—a large, converted house, standing in its own grounds on the cliff-side. The visitors were a widely mixed crowd, as Ralph had said. He had chosen the place for that very reason, knowing that in such a place, Gillie's vivid beauty and cheap shabby clothes would attract less attention.

But to Gillie the whole adventure seemed like something out of a story, or the films!

As they passed through the entrance and into the dance-hall, with its gay decorations, surging music and laughing, chattering crowd her eyes shone, and she drew a quick breath.

"Like it?" asked Ralph, beside her.

"Oh, I love it!" she said impulsively. "It's all—wonderful!"

They had a little table at the edge of the dance floor, and while Ralph was giving an order to the waiter, Gillie gazed about her with eager interest. Suddenly she became aware that a man at a near-by table was watching her intently.

He was good-looking in a forceful way. Strong, sunburnt face, dark-grey eyes, square chin. But for some reason, Gillie felt herself flushing under his steady glance, while her thoughts flew sensitively to her cheap frock and sixpenny string of beads.

Why was he looking at her like that? Perhaps he was wondering what she was doing here with a rich society man like Ralph Stanway! Well, let him! Who cared?

Gillie's soft chin went up, defiantly. She meant to have a good time. She had never had one before.

A fox-trot struck up, and the next moment she was in Ralph's arms, floating round joyously, for she loved dancing. Tangoes, quick-steps, waltzes followed! Delicious things to eat and a glass of champagne which Ralph insisted on her drinking! Then dancing again, her lovely eyes shining with excitement, her hair like a flame in the dazzling lights!

The fun grew wilder and more riotous as the night advanced. And swaying in Ralph's arms to a catchy waltz, Gillie suddenly realised that it must be getting very late!

"What's the time? I must be going!" she declared breathlessly.

Ralph laughed.

"Going? Rubbish! Who cares about the time!" he retorted. And swinging the girl into a dark, sheltered recess, he crushed her in his arms and pressed his lips to hers!

That kiss sent a sort of shock through Gillie. Tingling from head to foot, hardly knowing what her feelings were, she tried to free herself. But Ralph held her more closely.

"What's the matter? Don't be silly!" he whispered in a queer, husky voice. "You know well enough I'm awfully keen on you, Gillie! Have been ever since that first evening!"

Gillie struggled out of his arms.

"There's someone coming!" she stammered.

Ashamed Of His Sweetheart!

A LITTLE group of people were making straight for the recess. A tall, slim girl in an exquisite evening frock of moonlight blue, which set off her blonde beauty to perfection, and two smartly dressed men. In quick annoyance, Ralph glanced at them. Then all at once his face changed.

With a stifled exclamation he almost pushed Gillie back into the shadow.

"Wait here! I'll come back!" he whispered hurriedly, and stepped out, pulling the draperies together behind him.

Left alone, Gillie's first feeling was bewilderment with a touch of resentment.

Had Ralph seen someone he knew? Yet even if he had, he need not have gone off like that—almost without a word!

Her joyous sparkling mood ebbed away, leaving a queer depression—which as the minutes passed, deepened to a sort of panic. It must be dreadfully late! Had Ralph forgotten where she was! Why didn't he come back?

At last, in sheer desperation, Gillie got up and hurried out into the fast emptying dance hall. No sign of Ralph! And then, to her relief, she caught sight of his sleek dark head in the luxurious foyer beyond!

Threading her way quickly through the groups of people, she reached his side and touched his arm.

"Oh, I'm so glad I've found you!" she began impulsively. "I was wondering——"

The eager words snapped off short! The blonde girl in moonlight blue, whom Gillie suddenly noticed was standing next to Ralph, had wheeled

round and was looking her up and down in cold contemptuous amazement!

"Who on earth is this—person, Ralph?" she drawled.

There was a moment's taut silence. Into Ralph's eyes had leapt a strange, furtive look! Then his handsome face set in a supercilious mask, and he looked straight at Gillie without the slightest sign of recognition!

"Haven't the faintest idea!" he murmured, shrugging his shoulders. "You're making a mistake, my good girl! Come along, Denise! The car's waiting."

And slipping his hand through the other girl's arm, he moved away without a backward glance!

He was pretending not to know her! He was ashamed of her, before that smart society girl!

All the blood in Gillie's body seemed on fire, as she stood there! It was just as though someone had struck her in the face! Then turning, she hurried blindly away, not knowing where she went, her heart and throat swelling as though they would burst!

He had treated her as though she was dirt under his feet! And she—she had wondered if he meant to ask her to marry him! Oh, what a fool she had been! But it was her own fault for ever imagining that a gentleman of Ralph Stanway's class would have any real respect or consideration for just a working girl like her!

"Gentleman? He's a cad!" Gillie told herself passionately. Tears stung her eyes but with a fierce gesture of pride, she dashed them away. All she wanted now was never to see him again!

But how was she to get back to Cliff Bay! It was over twenty miles distant and the hands of a clock in the corridor where she was standing pointed to half-past two!

"I've got to do it somehow!" the girl thought desperately. Trying to fight down her panic, she hurried through a side-door and stared at the dark, winding cliff path by the sea. "If only there was a station near!"

"What's the matter? Can I help you?"

A blunt, masculine voice broke suddenly through her terrified thoughts, and turning with a start, Gillie looked straight into the strong, sun-burnt face of the man who had sat at the table near theirs.

He knew something of what had happened! The certainty flashed upon the girl as she met his steady grey eyes.

"I—I must get back to Cliff Bay, and—I was wondering if there was a station near," she stammered, while the shamed blood burnt her face. "I—somehow, I have missed—my friends."

"One minute," the man interrupted her, his tone oddly grim. "Forgive me for speaking plainly, but it's the best and quickest way out. If by your friend you mean Ralph Stanway, he is just taking his wife to her car."

His wife! Then he was married! That was why he had treated her like that! The blood tingling in Gillie's cheeks rushed in a scorching wave through her body! She had almost been having a love affair with a married man!

"I didn't know! He



"I won't share you with this stum girl," she cried. "Our engagement is over."

jewellery. I've got a string of pearls in my pocket now for that soft, lovely neck of yours. My wife's gone back to Paris to-day. Only came over to see what I was up to. Well, what do you say? Shall we go along there—now?"

He had rushed on while Gillie sat dazed by the insult of his words. But as he ended, she sprang up and faced him, panting, her small hands clenched.

"What are you daring to ask me?" she gasped. "You're married."

"What's that to do with it? Need not prevent my having a bit of fun! Don't tell me you've never had a bit of fun before!" Ralph's handsome face was flushed, his eyes smiled into hers with hateful meaning. "Didn't expect me to marry you, did you? Come, don't be so serious! Kiss me!"

And with the last word, he caught her in his arms and crushed his lips to hers!

The sheltered strip of sand was absolutely deserted except for themselves. Held brutally close, unable to cry out, Gillie fought wildly. Then suddenly she was conscious of footsteps striding round the boulder of rock and a wrench that sent her staggering backwards—free!

"Stand away—you blackguard!" said a grim, masculine voice that she had heard before. And, dazed and shaking, she became aware of Geoff Denver beside them, his strong fingers gripping Ralph's collar.

"Go along, Miss Brooke. I'll settle this," he said curtly. And only too thankful to obey, Gillie caught up her cheap beach-cloak and ran with painfully thumping heart to her tent along the shore.

LEFT alone, the two men faced one another. Ralph's handsome face was pale with rage.

"What d'you mean by butting in on my affairs?" he demanded thickly.

"I butt in when I think necessary," was Geoff's grim retort. "I've seen you about with that girl. I saw you last night at that dance-club. And you know as well as I do that your wife is only looking for evidence to get rid of you! Now," he took a step

Her rich fiance was in love with a girl of his own class. Should she give him up?



forward, his voice grimly deliberate, "you leave Miss Brooke alone in future—d'you understand?"

"So you know her, do you? What's she to you?"

"Nothing. But she's young and pretty and alone, and too good to be mixed up with a cad like you!" Geoff told him, deliberately.

"Oh, I begin to understand," Ralph broke in; and a sneering smile suddenly twisted his lips. "It was you who brought her back from the dance-club last night, eh? You want a little game on your own! Your last fling before getting married to Cynthia Deane! Well, Gillie's a pretty little bit of goods though her people do come from the slums—"

He stopped. Not because he wanted to, but because Geoff's fist had suddenly shot out and stretched him flat on the sands!

For some moments he lay there, dazed. Then he struggled up and glared after the other man's retreating figure.

"By Heaven!" he muttered through lips shaking with fury. "I'll get even with you for that!"

His thoughts were seething as he walked back along the promenade. He had always detested Geoff Denver, since the two men had become casually acquainted at the London hotel where Ralph was staying with his wife, some months before.

never told me!" she said, hardly knowing that she spoke aloud.

"I guessed you didn't, when I saw you with him, some time back," was the deliberate reply. "I know both Stanway and his wife, and I fancy she came back rather suddenly from Paris—before she was expected."

He paused a moment, looking away from the girl's burning face, then added:

"My car's just outside, and I can give you a lift back to Cliff Bay. You can trust me."

Glancing hurriedly at his strong, rugged face, over which a smile flickered for a moment, Gillie knew that she could trust this man! In any case she must trust him! It was her only way out of the desperate, impossible position into which her own folly had led her! And through the shamed tumult of her thoughts, she tried to stammer her thanks.

"That's all right," he told her, abruptly. "Come along."

Hardly a word was spoken between the two as they raced back along the coast path in the man's high-powered car. But when they drew up outside the door of her shabby lodgings, Gillie found her voice at last.

"You've been—awfully kind," she stammered. "I don't know what I should have done."

"I'm very glad to have been of use," her companion replied, and the grim lines of his face softened as he added, "but I wonder if I might give you a word of advice, Miss—"

"Brooke—Gillie Brooke."

"Thanks. My name's Geoff Denver. Now don't take offence at what I'm going to say. It's just this. Don't see Ralph Stanway again. His wife is looking for an excuse to get her freedom. And you're too young and fresh and pretty to be mixed up in anything of that sort!"

A moment later he was gone—driving away down the narrow, back street. And with her hand still tingling from the firm grip of his fingers, Gillie stole up to her room, her thoughts whirling.

How kind he had been! He had got her out of a hateful mess, and not asked a lot of curious questions, as other men might have done! And what a vain, blind little idiot she had been to fancy that Ralph Stanway was in love with her! Anyhow it had been a lesson.

Pulling off her flimsy frock, fear suddenly gripped the girl at the memory of Ralph's burning kiss, the queer look in his eyes. The inner meaning of Geoff Denver's words: "His wife is looking for an excuse to get her freedom," sent the scorching blood surging into her face again.

Yes! It might have been worse—much worse!

"You Surely Don't Expect Me To Marry You?"

NEXT day, however, back at her job in the beach kiosk, the whole occurrence seemed like a half-forgotten nightmare to Gillie.

She had been a fool, but that was over! Busy serving chocolates and cigarettes and watching the gay holiday crowd who swarmed on the sands, the girl's carefree vitality reasserted itself. And when

she went off to have a dip that afternoon—it was her early day off—she had pushed the hateful happening out of her mind.

At least so far as the unpleasant part of it was concerned. But lying on the sun-warmed sand, taking a sunbath after her dip, a strong, rugged face and steady grey eyes rose up again before Gillie.

How kind he had been! He had looked after her, spoken to her in a way that didn't make her feel—cheap!

Geoff Denver! The name suited him somehow! It wasn't likely she would see him again, of course. But...

"There you are, Gillie. I've been looking for you everywhere!"

A familiar, caressing voice struck like a sudden shock through the girl's dreaming thoughts! And turning swiftly, she stared straight into Ralph Stanway's handsome face as he sauntered round a great boulder of rock towards her!

The sight of him brought back last night's happenings in a scorching wave of humiliation. She jerked herself on to her elbow, her eyes ablaze.

"How dare you come here!" she flared. "I don't want you! I was hoping I'd never see you again!"

"Oh, come, be a sport!" Ralph urged coolly, as he dropped down beside her. But into his eyes, lingering on the slim, lovely lines of her figure, had leapt an odd flame. "I came along on purpose to explain about last night. You don't understand—"

"I understand, all right!" struck in Gillie, every nerve quivering. "You were ashamed of me last night—before your wife!"

"My wife! Who told you?" the man demanded.

"Never mind that!" Gillie retorted. "You pretended not to know me! You treated me as though—" The words choked in the girl's throat for a moment. Then she rushed on fiercely, "Now, I don't want to know you! Go away from here, please!"

Ralph gave a low, amused laugh. "So angry—and so lovely," he murmured. "Now look here, my dear little girl, I was in the devil of a hole, last evening! My wife was in France, as I thought, for the summer. How was I to know that she'd take it into her head to come back suddenly, find out at my hotel where I was, and turn up at that club, last night? Be reasonable. What I did was as much for your sake as mine. It would have been very unpleasant for you. Don't you see that? I came back to explain, after I'd put her into her car, but I couldn't find you anywhere! How did you get back?"

"No thanks to you that I got back at all!" the girl retorted with swift contempt. "A gentleman—not a cad—helped me. But for him I might have been in a terrible position!"

"Now that's where you're quite wrong," Ralph broke in. "I was savage at the way our evening was spoilt. I'd planned such a wonderful ending. Listen, Gillie!"

He bent over her, his breath warm on her slim neck, his voice dropping to a passionate whisper.

"There's a cottage I've taken just along the coast. A sweet little place. You shall have pretty frocks,

*Begin This Passionate
Serial Here.*

15



ONE HOUR of love, of passion, of moonlight and rapture, when a girl gave all the love of her heart to a man. AND THEN REGRET: the bitter, humiliating regret of knowing that he had only regarded her as a pretty toy whose love could be bought!

"I've always loved you—I love you still."

Jill could hardly realise that Guy Clifford was really standing there; really believing her innocence at last.

So many people had blackened her character, in his eyes. Rick Anderson, his cousin, who hadn't wanted Guy, wealthy and famous, to marry a sixpenny-store girl. Gwen Farraday, of Guy's own class, who wanted Guy herself. Drake Meredith, who had offered Jill everything but a wedding ring. Even Cicely Fenshaw, once her own friend, who saw in Jill's tangled love affair a way to step into society herself.

But now Rick Anderson was ill and had confessed to Guy that he had falsely accused Jill. Gwen, a few hours Guy's bride, was dead, after a fatal accident. And now Guy had come back to her.

"Guy," she whispered. "Oh, Guy!"

At that moment there was a knock at the door. A telegraph boy, with a telegram for Jill, stood outside. As she read the words of the message Jill whitened, remembering, with a sudden rush of terror, that she was not free to love Guy.

Remembering that, to quieten Cicely who had heard Guy and his bride quarrelling and threatened

to tell the police of the quarrel, she had been forced to promise herself to Drake for one thousand pounds, the price of Cicely's silence.

She read the telegram slowly.

We leave for Paris to-night. Don't forget your promise. DRAKE.

That night Jill left with Drake for Paris. There was no other thing to do; but she left with terror in her heart, and despair.

Terror because she had to go through with her bargain. Despair because Guy had found out what she was doing, but didn't know why!

The next night Jill married Drake, in a tiny hospital ward in Paris, where he lay, dying the doctors said, without ever fulfilling her promise to him.

In a café brawl, soon after their arrival, Drake had been injured, and as he lay on his death bed he had begged her to marry him.

"You might as well have my fortune Jill . . . don't refuse my last request."

So she had married him. Married him, and then found that he would live to make her his wife in more than name only.

Terrified by the ordeal that still lay ahead of her,

by
Jasmine Day

And the bitter humiliation of this afternoon had turned that feeling to savage hatred!

Rotten, puritanical prig! With his absurdly chivalrous attitude towards women and his idiotic worship of Cynthia Deane, the girl he was going to marry soon! If he, Ralph, could only find a way to hit back at him!

Cynthia Deane!

Ralph's raging reflections broke off suddenly as an idea flashed through his mind!

Cynthia Deane was the biggest thing in Geoff Denver's life! Ever since his first meeting with the beautiful, poised Society girl among the members of Ralph's party at the London hotel, Geoff had had eyes and thoughts for no one else! He was madly infatuated with her! And she was coming to Cliff Bay in a day or two!

If through Cynthia Deane, the girl he loved, Geoff Denver could be made to suffer . . .!

"I'll find some way!" Ralph told himself savagely. "Interfere with my affairs would he! We'll see!"

He dropped down into a deck chair and lit a cigarette, his mind busy with a promising scheme.

Meanwhile, dressing hurriedly in the shelter of her bathing hut, Gillie was reflecting that this was the second time Geoff Denver had come to her rescue!

"It seems like fate!" ran her thoughts. And then she pulled herself up with a hot flush.

"I've been a fool once!" she reminded herself. "Better not run the risk of being a worse one! Still, it would be nice to see him once more—just to thank him."

Men Called Her "Just A Good-time Girl!"

"HAS Miss Cynthia Deane arrived yet?"

"Yes, sir. This afternoon."

"Have that taken up to her, will you?"

Geoff scribbled a few words on a card and handed it to the hotel attendant. But as he sauntered into the lounge his heart was racing in anticipation of the meeting with the girl he loved.

For Ralph had been right. Geoff Denver almost worshipped Cynthia Deane, the beautiful, brilliant Society girl whom he was marrying in a very short time.

She had been a member of Ralph's smart party at the London hotel where Geoff had put up, on his return from Canada, a few months before. And he had fallen straightway in love with her perfect, blonde loveliness and surface charm of manner.

Within a month, he had asked her to marry him. and now, with the wedding only a few weeks ahead, he had left Cynthia in Town buying her trousseau, while he came to Cliff Bay to make arrangements for the luxurious bungalow where they were to spend the first part of their honeymoon.

To-day, she was coming down to join him. And waiting for her now in the lounge of the Grand Hotel, where a room had been engaged for her, Geoff's deep grey eyes were alight with happiness.

He loved and believed in her so completely! He

never dreamed that beneath that perfect exterior was a cold, calculating and utterly selfish nature!

His dreaming thoughts snapped off as a girl, slim, blonde, and exquisitely turned out, came through the lounge entrance. And with his strong, good-looking face lighting up, he started forward.

"Cynthia! Why didn't you wire me what train you were coming by and let me meet it? My darling!"

"No—please Geoff!" Cynthia Deane put up a small, perfectly manicured hand as he would have swept her into his arms, in the deserted lounge. "I didn't ask you to meet me because I wanted time—to think. I have something to show you, something you must explain."

"Explain!" He fell back, gazing at her in utter bewilderment. Her beautiful face was cold, her manner hostile. She seemed completely changed from the lovely, alluring girl who had taken his heart and senses by storm! "Cynthia, what is the matter! What has happened?"

"That is for you to tell me! This afternoon when I arrived here, I got—that!"

And drawing a letter from the mass of jewelled and scented trifles in her vanity bag, Cynthia held it towards him.

For a moment Geoff stared at it in utter mystification. Then, as some words leaped up at him, the blood surged into his face.

Do you know how your future husband is amusing himself down here? (ran the note in obviously disguised handwriting). Have you heard about the pretty working-class girl he's picked up with? Ask him about Gillie Brooke! Ask him what he was doing with her at a certain notorious night-club, three nights ago! Ask him how he enjoyed driving her back in his car, alone with him, at three o'clock in the morning!

A FRIEND.

"Well?"

Cynthia's voice, ice-cold, struck through Geoff's racing thoughts. He tore the letter to pieces, crushed them in his hand.

"Anonymous!" he said, his voice rasping in his intense anger and contempt. "An anonymous letter sent to you with the intention of poisoning your mind against me, by some low-down coward who dared not sign it! It's beneath your notice, Cynthia!"

"That's not the point. Is it true—what that letter says?" Cynthia broke in, her eyes as hard and cold as her voice. And at the direct challenge the hot blood flushed up again to Geoff's forehead.

If he told the whole truth of that fateful evening, he would have to mention Ralph's name. Cynthia was a friend of Ralph's wife, and it might mean that Gillie would be dragged into the divorce proceedings, which Ralph's wife was trying to bring against her husband.

To clear himself, Geoff must endanger the good name of the lonely girl he had befriended. For even though she was innocent of any cruel charge brought against her—mud always stuck!

"Cynthia," he said at length. "I'll tell you the facts of that evening, as far as I can. I did befriend

(Continued on page 32.)

news came to her that Guy lay seriously injured in hospital.

She didn't know that Cicely had told him why she herself had gone away with Drake. She didn't know that that was why, reckless, heartbroken, he had driven his car so carelessly that he had crashed.

She rushed to England, to his side, to be told that, his mind wandering, he thought that she was his wife.

So, to hurry on his recovery, she pretended to him that she *was* his wife.

Until, one day, Drake, furious, and bitter, found her, and demanded that she should come away with him.

Jill pleaded, for Guy's sake, to remain three days more, promising then to come to him. Before he left, Drake took her into his arms. She dare not resist him.

Then, over Drake's shoulder, she saw Guy at the window, with a horrified look in his eyes as he saw them.

**"How Dare You Pretend To Be
Another Man's Wife, When You
Belong To Me?"**

AT Jill's cry, the matron rushed into the room, fear in her eyes. She had been afraid for Jill ever since she had admitted the husband. There had been something fierce and relentless about him, she had thought. Had he come prepared to make Jill suffer?

"Is anything wrong, my dear?" she cried.

"There at the window . . . Guy!" Jill gasped.

"I saw him there."

The matron looked. But there was no sign of Guy.

She ran through the french windows out on to the lawn. There, half-way across the lawn lay the unconscious form of Guy. She called the nurses quickly and had him carried inside. Jill watched them, distraught. How much had Guy seen? Would it seriously harm him?

"When he comes to, I'll try and persuade him it was an illusion; that it wasn't you he saw in the sitting-room just now, but one of my nurses," said the matron. "He may accept the explanation. I'll tell him you were out for a walk at the time."

Jill was silent, frightened. Drake looked on with a sneer.

A short time later, Jill went with Drake to the railway station. His thin lips curled in a sneer. "Rather a queer situation, isn't it? Leaving my wife to pretend she's another man's wife!"

"But, Drake, he's so ill!"

"Still, you must admit I'm generous my dear. Few men, I think, would be so considerate! All the same," he drew her towards him in the taxicab, his hand passed caressingly down one of her arms, "I'll have my reward, won't I? You swear in three days time . . ." His arm tightened about her.

"Yes, yes, I swear it, Drake," she whispered.

"And in the meantime, no love-making! That's another thing you've got to promise me. I'm not going to have Guy Clifford making love to my

wife." His hand was on her wrist now, crushing it so tightly he was hurting her.

"Yes, I promise you that, too, Drake!" The pain in her wrist was so intense she had to bite her lips to prevent herself from crying out.

"You'd better be careful," he added.

"You've had my promise." Her lips were stiff and white.

"Very well." He let go of her wrist. There was an ugly mark there. He saw it and became contrite immediately. He bent and kissed it. "Darling, I'm so sorry. I love you so much."

She closed her eyes suddenly. She felt so tired. She didn't know which she dreaded most. His cruelty or his love-making. His moods changed with such rapidity.

"You don't love me now, do you?" he whispered. "But you will . . . when you come to me! I swear I'll make you love me then. I have made many women love me in my time. . . . No woman can resist me!"

MEANWHILE, in the hospital, the matron was making her explanation to Guy.

"You say it wasn't Jill, my wife," he whispered. "But I saw her, saw her with some man—I couldn't see who he was. She was kissing him."

"I've told you it was my little Irish nurse and her fiancé. Why, your wife went out for a walk half-an-hour before. She hasn't been back to the hospital since. When she does come back you and she can laugh about this together."

He appeared to be convinced and she left the room well pleased with herself. But, after she had gone, Guy lay there for a very long time staring straight up at the ceiling. His face was puzzled. There was a look of pain in his grey eyes, and a grim line held his lips.

Later when Jill came into the room he called her over to his bedside.

"You've been out for rather a long walk, haven't you?" he questioned.

"Yes, it has been rather a long walk." But her voice sounded queer even to her own ears.

"Had a nice time—on your walk?"

Was it her imagination or did he purposely stress those last words?

"Oh, very nice." And she tried to laugh lightly.

"Well, since you enjoyed yourself . . ." He broke off abruptly. His voice changed suddenly. It was hungry, urgent, full of love, of passion. "But I've missed you, my dearest. Every moment you're away from me seems a century. I'm on edge, suspicious."

She broke in on him with a light, forced laugh. "But what should you be suspicious of, Guy?"

He shook his head. "I don't know. When you love someone as I love you, Jill. Bend down and kiss me, darling, let me put my arms about you."

She drew away from him sharply. Her face twitched in pain.

"I—I can't, Guy."

"Why?" Again a look of suspicion had leapt to his eyes. "Why, my dear?"

She shook her head miserably. She walked away



His unwilling bride cowered from him. Why, she wondered, desperately, had she ever tied herself to such a brute?

from him over to the window. She couldn't bear to look at him just then.

"I—I don't feel like it, Guy. I suppose I'm too tired after my walk."

"But one little kiss, Jill!"

"Please don't ask me to, Guy." There was something suspiciously like tears in her voice.

"All right, my dear." His face hardened. But more in pain than in anger. "I won't ever ask you to do anything you don't want to do. You know that, don't you? I won't force my love upon you if you don't want it."

"Don't Guy!" There was agony in her small stifled voice. Her hands were clenched so tightly that her finger nails bit deep into the flesh.

He smiled faintly, twistedly. "Very well, let's talk of something else, shall we, Jill? I suppose love is a slightly boring subject to talk about when we've been married as long as we have."

She bit her lower lip sharply with white, even teeth. But still she didn't speak. She continued staring out of the window. Perhaps it was better to let him think that she was bored with his love. That was one way of keeping her promise to Drake.

Oh, but if only she could have thrown her arms about him, could have whispered: "I love you, Guy. More than the whole world! If it hurts you to think I'm tired of our love, it's agony to me. But I can't explain. Not now."

But could she ever hope to explain to him? How could she when she was Drake's wife, when in three days she must go to him?

HAPPINESS of a strange kind, and misery, were blended in those next days. It was happiness to be near him, to be able to touch his hand occasionally, to see the expressions change on his lean, good-looking face. But there was misery, too. Misery to have to crush down her love; never to allow herself to respond to him.

And then the third day came. Jill left in the morning. She had various things to do before she went to Drake that night—her real wedding night! What a hideous farce it would be!

She stood in the doorway and said good-bye to Guy. He was convalescent now; sitting in the sun in an armchair.

"I'm going up to Town to-day," she said. There was a queer, tense note in her voice as though she were really saying much more than that. He seemed to notice it, for he raised his head with a

(Continued on page 20.)

Honeymoon Hotel

Her

I TOLD
you last
week all
about the
big, fashionable
seaside hotel at
which I am a re-
ception clerk.

It is an interest-
ing job, mine; I
see so much of life.

All kinds come to the Royal Hotel at times. Some of them are celebrities whose names you would all know, others are people neither rich nor famous, ordinary people such as you and I, and it is their stories that interest me more, I think.

You can read in the papers all there is to be known about a famous actress or a film star, but only I can tell you how Elsie Stammers . . .

Well, I had better begin at the beginning. Elsie wasn't a guest at the Royal. I met her one afternoon during my off-duty time.

I had been taking my usual walk along the promenade as far as the harbour, which is right at the very end furthest from the hotel. It was one of those days when the weather forecast says: "Bright periods with occasional showers," and I was half-way back when I landed in for one of the occasional showers!

Almost without any warning the sky opened and let loose a torrent of rain, and, having no coat over my sleeveless silk frock, I hastily took cover in the nearest shelter.

There was only one other person inside, a girl, and for a while we sat silently side by side on the wooden seat, staring out to sea, which by now was no more than a murky grey blot. Then I turned and glanced at my companion.

She was about nineteen or twenty, and most awfully pretty in rather the Janet Gaynor style—small and fragile and wistful-looking.

It was that wistful look that made me speak to her, I think.

"What a climate ours is," I said, and she nodded.

"Yes. And it's my last day, too."

"That's too bad," I said. "Are you just down for a holiday, then?"

She nodded again.

"Yes."

She seemed a little shy, and I thought that was all she was going to say; then she turned to me as though she had suddenly decided she was glad to have someone to speak to.

I work in a drapers in London. We only

HOLIDAY LOVER

get a fortnight. It's not much, is it? Still—it's long enough when you're alone." There was a note of sadness in her voice that quite hurt me to hear it. It seemed wrong that she should be lonely and sad. She ought to have been with jolly companions of her own age, or some nice boy, perhaps. She looked up at me. "Are you on holiday, too?"

I smiled. "No. I work here. I'm a receptionist at the Royal Hotel."

"Fancy!" A little smile flitted across her face. "I've never

been inside the Royal. I'm staying at Mrs. Brown's at Seaview. I should think it was a nice job. But I wouldn't like to work here." Suddenly she looked down at her hands in her lap and said, very quietly, but with such a depth of feeling in her voice that I was astonished: "I think I hate this place."

"I wonder why?" I exclaimed. "I'm rather fond of it."

"Oh, it isn't the fault of the town itself, of course—but, well, I suppose I ought to have had more sense than to have come here again."

She was gazing out to sea. It was still pouring hard, but a streak of light over the horizon showed that the shower would soon be over.

"You see, when I was down here last year I met—him. And this year something made me come back. I felt I wanted to see the places where we'd been together, do the things we'd done together—just for remembrance sake. But it hurt. I ought to have known it would hurt."

She broke off and was silent. I found myself wishing she would go on, and something told me that having started, she would.

I don't know why it is, but people often tell me things. A man once said to me: "It's something in your eyes, Beryl. While you keep that look in your eyes people will always tell you things."

I am glad they do. Perhaps I am merely curious by nature, or perhaps it is because I know it often helps one to talk about the things that worry or sadden one to someone who will listen and understand.

Anyway, she did go on.

"I think I fell in love with him at once. He was everything I had always known the man I should love would be—tall, handsome, splendid.

"He was a salesman in a motor firm in Great Portland Street, and when our holidays were over and we were both back at work he used to take me out every Saturday, and in the evenings, too. Then one day he asked me to marry him." Her voice trembled just a little. "I hadn't known it was possible to be so happy. I ought to have realised it was too wonderful to last for ever. He talked of getting married in the spring, and he said he wanted me to meet his mother—he often talked of her. And one day I did. She came to the house where I lodged, by herself."

She looked at me, and a sad little smile touched her mouth.

"She came to ask me to give him up. You see, there was something I didn't know till she told me. He had a very rich uncle, and his uncle had just died and left him everything, and he had come into a lot of money and a lovely house in the country and cars and things, and I—well, I wasn't the kind of girl who was meant to be the mistress of a big country house."

She paused. Her underlip quivered ever so

A deep undercurrent of love, hate and secret drama . . . a luxury world revealed in a light that will amaze and surprise you. Beryl Mears, who writes these true dramas, is a reception clerk at a luxury hotel. She takes you behind the scenes; shares the secrets of the hotel with you.

slightly, and she caught it with her small white teeth.

"And there was another girl. His uncle's ward, his mother told me. There had been an understanding between them until he met me, and it was she he really loved. His mother said he couldn't bear to tell me himself because he'd given me his word and didn't want to hurt me, and she said she was going to leave it to me to do what I thought was right."

She gave a little laugh that was hardly a laugh at all but more like a sob. "Well, there was only one thing I could do, wasn't there? I wrote to him—she suggested I should do that because she said it would save my pride—and told him there was someone else."

She plucked at a tiny scrap of handkerchief, and said, huskily: "But there wasn't anyone else. There never can be anyone else."

The rain ceased almost as she finished speaking, and hardly had it stopped than the

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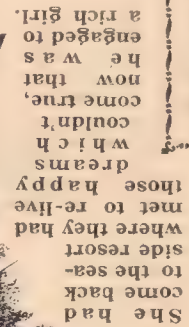
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"That's right," I said. "You are young — and so pretty — and I'm sure you have lots of happiness ahead of you yet." And, after I had parted from her, I told myself that before long she would meet some other man and will just as much in love with him, but I knew that I did not believe it, and I knew that she spoke the truth when she said there were said there were one else.



slightly, and she caught it with her small white teeth.

"Did you mind my telling you all this?" she spoke with an embarrassed little blush.

"I've never told anyone before," he told her, solemnly, to talk.

"I took her hand and pressed it."

"My dear," I said gently, "thank you for telling me that much."

"Then that's all?"

"Her eyes were suspiciously bright, but she smiled at me."

"Well," I know now that I did wrong to come here, but my holiday is over to-morrow and I'm going back to forget it all and start a new life."

"I still cannot imagine why you wanted to come to this place, Nell," she complained. "I don't think it's nearly as pretty as

(Continued on next page.)

slightly, and she caught it with her small white teeth.

HONEYMOON HOTEL

(Continued from previous page.)

Bournemouth. I'd much rather have gone to Bournemouth."

"The fishing's good here," he explained a trifle lamely, I thought, and the girl turned up her aristocratic nose.

"Fishing!" she drawled. "You needn't think you're going to spend your whole time fishing, Neil. Nasty, messy business!"

I looked on, slightly amused by them and inclined to pity that young man between the two of them, and then he turned to me and smiled.

He had nice, rather sad grey eyes.

"May we go up at once?"

"Certainly," I said. I handed him the keys, and in the wake of a page they moved off in the direction of the lifts.

I don't think I mentioned that the reception desk stands across a corner of the Palm Lounge.

Just before dinner the lounge is always crowded with guests having cocktails or waiting for friends, but between eight and nine o'clock it is usually fairly quiet, and it was practically deserted that evening at eight, when Neil Withers strolled in dressed for dinner and ordered a whisky and soda.

He sat smoking for a few minutes in an armchair, waiting, presumably, for his mother and fiancée to come down, then he came across to the desk and asked me for a road map of the neighbourhood, explaining that his mother would want to go for motor drives.

"I've stayed in this place before," he added with a faint smile, "but when I did, I did not own a car—and I couldn't afford to stay at the Royal, either! I used to put up at one of those comic little places down by the harbour."

"Oh, yes?" I said. "Are you fond of fishing?"

"Fishing?" He answered me absently. "Not particularly."

In view of that previous conversation, I was rather surprised. He was poring over the map I had opened for him, but I couldn't think he was really looking for it.

"I wonder if it is a mistake to go back to places you have known under different circumstances?" he was saying slowly. "I think, perhaps, it is. I think, perhaps, it does more harm than good. It unfastens doors that are better left shut. I wish we had gone to Bournemouth, after all."

There was a weary bitterness in his voice.

I stared at him, hard.

A perfectly crazy notion had come into my head. At least, it seemed crazy on the face of it.

"I don't know," I said steadily. "It is funny you should mention that. I happened to meet a girl this afternoon and we were discussing that very subject. Something had drawn her back here where she had been before under happier circumstances. Apparently she had met the man she loved here. She adored him. She worked in a drapers, and he was a motor salesman, and they were going to be

ONE HOUR AND THEN REGRET

(Continued from page 17.)

jerk and looked at her. There was something in his gaze she couldn't quite fathom.

"But you'll be back to-night?" he urged.

She averted her head. "I—I'll try to be."

"You will be back if you want to be back, Jill."

His voice was almost stern.

She didn't say anything, and there was a pause that was painful to them both.

married. And then he inherited a fortune, and she wasn't good enough to be the mistress of his fine house, so he threw her over for a society girl who would do credit to his wealth. He hadn't even the courage to tell her himself, so he sent his mother to do it for him. And, because she was brave and sweet, the girl wrote and told him she cared for someone else."

He was staring at me. He was perfectly white, and he stammered a little.

"Do you mind saying that all over again?"

"I think you heard it all," I said.

He went on staring at me, for minutes it seemed. Then he drew a long, deep breath.

"So that was it—that was it! I see it all now! Mother was desperately anxious for me to marry Clarice—and so was Clarice, if it came to that! It was my mother who went to Elsie and made her write that letter! It's perfectly plain! Elsie would never have done it otherwise. She loved me—I swear she loved me!"

He gripped my wrist. I don't think he realised how awfully strong he was, and I carried a bruise for days!

"You've seen her!" he said. "Where is she? I've got to know!"

I remembered that the girl had mentioned where she was staying, and I told him.

"I shouldn't waste any time if you want to see her," I said. "She is leaving to-morrow."

"I'm going now," he said briefly. "But before I go I want to ask you one thing—do you really believe I knew about this?"

I looked straight into his eyes. I liked what I saw there.

"No," I said. "If I had thought so I wouldn't have told you where to find her."

And then he was gone, hatless and just as he was, and I turned a second later to see his mother at my elbow.

"Have you seen my son?" she demanded. "He's not in the dining-room, and we're late for dinner already."

"Yes," I smiled at her pleasantly. "He has just gone out of that door. He has gone to see the girl he loves, and I shouldn't think he'll be back in time for dinner, either."

Just as I spoke Clarice came trailing down the wide staircase, exquisite in a beige lace evening frock.

She had heard what I had said. They stared at me, and then at one another, and then they both turned an angry red.

There is a very short sequel to this little story, and it lies in a reservation for our bridal suite and two signatures in the hotel register.

They read: "Neil Withers," and "Mrs. Elsie Withers."

"A PRINCESS' FORBIDDEN LOVE" is the intriguing title of Beryl's next true drama. You must not miss it. Order next week's "Betty's" now.

"Well, good-bye, Guy." Despite herself her voice broke.

"Come here, Jill." There was a command in his voice. He stretched out his hand, and when she came close to him he took her hand in his. He noticed it was trembling.

"Is anything the matter, Jill?"

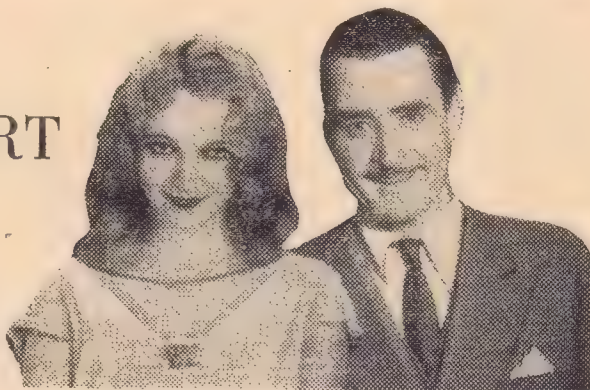
"No, no," but her voice belied her words.

He sighed and again that look of pain showed in

(Continued on page 22.)

The Girl JACK GILBERT LOVES . . .

Some Interesting Facts
about Virginia Bruce—
Will Connie Bennett
Retire?



Virginia Bruce wears a happy smile because she wears Jack Gilbert's ring!

ARE you up-to-date about Virginia Bruce, who is wearing Jack Gilbert's engagement ring, and a radiant smile these days?

She started as a chorus girl in New York. *Paramount* gave her a contract, but Virginia didn't raise much applause, and soon returned to the stage. Then *Metro-Goldwyn* gave her a second chance, and she began to make good.

Her most important part so far is opposite James Cagney in *Winner Takes All*, which you will see quite soon.

Virginia is tall, stately, and blonde.

She has two ambitions. First, to make Jack happy, and, second, to star opposite him in his next film, *Downstairs*.

At the moment it looks as if she will realise both.

TAKE a long look at Constance Bennett, for you may not be seeing her very much longer.

The rumour-mongers of Hollywood tell me that Connie plans to visit Great Britain in September for a few months, and after that will return to Hollywood for one year more only.

Connie herself denies that she will cease to ornament the world's cinema screens in a year's time. On the other hand the gossipers persist that they have "inside information" about her future plans.

Connie and her husband, they say, have found that it isn't easy to be happily married in Hollywood, and, as soon as she is free, intend to live in Europe.

Well, anyway, if Connie *does* desert the film studios we will all be sorry.

THERE are rumours that lovely Joan Blondell was demanding more salary in that high and mighty way some stars have.

But Joan is not like that. It wasn't money, but a long holiday that she asked from her employers.

She has made fifteen films in one year, and her doctor has warned her that she will have a nervous

breakdown if she doesn't take a rest. So she is getting the holiday she deserves!

Hollywood Heartbeats

JOAN BLONDELL is seen out with George Barnes, cameraman.

This week Loretta Young's boy friend is Gilbert Roland, and it looks as if he'll still be her boy friend next week, too!

Miriam Hopkins has adopted a baby boy.

June Collyer and Stuart Erwin won't need to do any adopting. According to well-informed rumours they will have one of their own soon.

Zasu Pitts, recently divorced, has been seen several times out with Ed Woodall, tennis star. But Zasu is not learning tennis!

WHAT do you do when you're told you have a ladder in your stocking? What can you do? Well, here is what Marlene Dietrich does.

A friend called her attention to a ladder in her stocking. Marlene thanked him, stripped off the stocking, put back her shoe, and walked on, unconcerned, wearing one stocking and carrying the other in her hand.

Could you get away with that?

Odds and Ends

CONNIE BENNETT'S salary is so well known that people are asking what her sister, Joan, gets. The answer is £6,000 a picture, and four pictures a year, which comes out to £24,000 a year.

Janet Gaynor, who isn't interested in sport, is taking tennis lessons—with her mother.

Clara Bow spends her spare time writing poetry.

Sylvia Sidney hates the colour red. Yet she has bought a dress that colour because all her friends insist that it will suit her.

Richard Dix has just paid £50 for a Scotch terrier.

ALFRED CONRAD.

ONE HOUR AND THEN REGRET

(Continued from page 20.)

his deep-set eyes. "You're not very happy with me, are you, dearest? I've been noticing it these past few days. Did we quarrel or have an estrangement before the accident?"

Her eyes fell before his, casting shadows on her pale cheeks. "Something like that, Guy," she murmured.

"Is that why you won't kiss me, darling?"

"No, that isn't why." Her voice was muffled.

He sighed and leant back in the chair. He passed a hand over his eyes. "It's queer when I love you so much to think that you mayn't love me."

Again she didn't reply. If only she could have said, "But I do, I do! I adore you, darling!" But how could she without the next moment finding herself in his arms, without feeling his kisses on her lips and returning those kisses? How could she in the face of her sworn promise to Drake?

"I must go, Guy." She pulled her hand abruptly out of his. She couldn't bear to stand there a moment longer. It was agony to leave him, but it was worse agony to stand here with everything she was longing to say to him unsaid.

"Good-bye, Jill!" At the pain in his voice she found the tears forcing their way into her eyes. She turned and fled.

Blinded by her tears, she bumped into the matron in the corridor. The matron took one look at her and led her into her private sitting-room. She put her arms about Jill.

"I understand, my dear," she whispered. "Believe me, I understand."

Jill couldn't speak. She was crying quietly. Crying out all her sorrow and heartbreak at leaving Guy under this awful shadow of misunderstanding. But what could she do?

"You've done a brave thing these past few days," the matron was whispering. "You've saved the life of a very fine young man. I'm sorry if pain has come to you through it, but you can always console yourself with the thought that you couldn't have done more. No one could have done more." Her voice faltered. There were tears in her own eyes.

Later, when Jill left, she felt a little consoled. Just to share a grief helps somehow.

She Had Sold Her Love To Save His Life!

DRAKE MEREDITH wasn't in the least pleased to find Cicely Fenshaw waiting for him in his flat when he returned that afternoon. He knew her for what she was. Recently he had decided that he had been rather a fool to have let her bleed him for as much as she did that night. But then he had been so anxious to discover the whereabouts of Jill. But he had found Jill now. To-night she would be here, in his flat, his wife. He must get rid of Cicely Fenshaw without delay.

"Well, what can I do for you, Miss Fenshaw?" He didn't try to make his voice sound pleasant.

An angry colour rose to Cicely's cheeks.

"Oh, so that's how you speak to me, is it?" she flung out at him sharply. "Seems to me you were all over yourself to be polite when you came to my flat the other day!"

"I'm sorry. Perhaps I'm rather busy this afternoon."

Cicely was about to make an angry retort, when she bit it back. After all, she had come to try and get something out of him. For policy's sake alone it was up to her to be pleasant.

"Of course if you're busy—" She rose from the chair and picked up her blue suede gloves. All the same she didn't go. She was looking at him inquiringly. "I thought I might be able to help you," she said at last.

"Help me?" His dark eyebrows shot up. "That's very kind of you. Just how did you think you could help me?"

"Help you to get Jill back again. I'm her pal, you know. She'll listen to me. And you love her, don't you?"

The faint smile on Drake's face deepened. "And, of course, you're just doing all this to be kind, aren't you, Miss Fenshaw? You don't expect anything in return for any small service you may render me, do you?"

Cicely laughed unconvincingly. She sank down into the chair again.

"Of course I want to help you all I can, Mr. Meredith. But I'm a poor girl, you know, and just at the moment..." She paused suddenly, startled by the fierce, angry expression she saw in Drake Meredith's face.

"Now get this clearly, Miss Fenshaw"—his voice was cold and stern—"it's no use your coming round here trying to get money out of me, because I'm no fool. Not another penny do you get from me ever. And what's more, I'll give my servants instructions that if you ever try and force your way in here again you are to be thrown out! And"—his voice grew openly sarcastic—"while I'm grateful to you for your kind intentions, they are not needed. Jill, my wife, is returning to me to-night—for good! As a matter of fact, I'm expecting her to dinner!"

"Then you don't care that she's been posing as another man's wife?" Cicely flung at him.

The muscles of his face tightened momentarily. A savage dark gleam appeared in his eyes. But his voice was controlled as he replied: "Oh, that was explained easily enough. The deception was carried on under doctor's orders. The only person deluded was poor Clifford himself. God, I'm sorry for him when he finds out!" And he laughed grimly.

A moment later he pressed the bell. "Kindly show this person out," he said to the butler.

Cicely swung round on him in a perfect fury of rage. "You'll be sorry you treated me like this, Drake Meredith. I swear no man can treat me like this and get away with it!"

Drake bowed ironically. "I think I shall be able to, Miss Fenshaw. It's very seldom a young lady in your position is capable of harming a man in mine!" He laughed sardonically and added: "Open the door a little wider, please, Mason. The young lady doesn't appear to see her way out!"

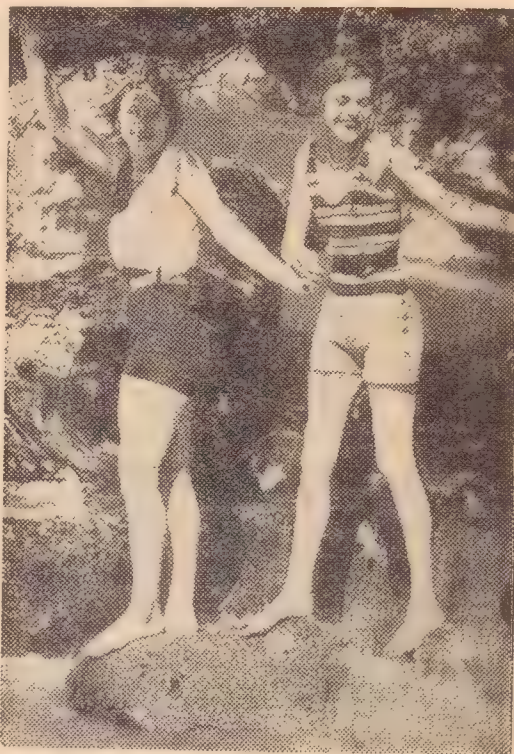
There was black rage in Cicely's heart as she left

£10 ! for a HOLIDAY SNAP !

MOST people keep snapshot albums nowadays ; nearly everybody takes a snapshot camera away with them on holiday. For there is no better way to recapture the happy leisure moments of holiday-time than by a snap !

So here is a competition for everybody . . . open to all readers.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO : Send the snap of yourself you like best, with the following words written on the back, "I declare that this is a snapshot of myself," to "Snapshots," BETTY'S PAPER, 196, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1. Read the rules printed on page 36, and fill in the coupon, also on that page, which must be enclosed with your entry. Send also a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you want your snap returned. Six photographs will be published each week for six weeks, the sender of each winning 10/6, and the final prize-winner will be selected from the published photographs.



£10

Will be given for the best reader's snapshot entered.

36

Prizes of 10/6 will be awarded to the senders of published snaps.

the expensive flats. She had never been more furious in her life with anyone than she was with Drake Meredith. Somehow she must be revenged. But how ? Jill was coming back that night to him. He loved Jill. He wanted Jill. He had even married her. If only she could think up some plan to spoil to-night for him ! If only she could think of someone to help her !

Suddenly a name flashed into her mind. *Guy Clifford* ! Guy, who had been deluded into thinking Jill was his wife. Did he know she was going that night to Drake's flat ? And if he did know, wouldn't he move heaven and earth to prevent it ?

She decided to go out to the nursing-home without delay. All the same it took her some time to get there. The evening shadows were closing in by the time she arrived.

She wouldn't ring the bell and ask to see Guy.

They mightn't admit her. She knew, from that last time she had been out here, just where his room was. And it was quite likely she might find the door that led out on to the balcony open on such a hot summer's night.

She tiptoed across the veranda and peered inside. Guy couldn't see her, owing to the dusk, but she

(Continued on next page.)

"EROS"

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"ADVERS," 4, Disraeli Road, Putney, S.W.15.

FORCED TO BE HIS BRIDE!

ONE HOUR AND THEN REGRET

(Continued from previous page.)

could see him clearly in the bright lamplight. He was sitting in an armchair, a book open on his knees. But he wasn't reading. He was staring straight ahead of him with a rather fixed stare. His face was drawn and tired-looking, she thought. There were deep shadows under his eyes.

SHE slipped into the room. He hadn't heard her. She walked round in front of him.

"Mr. Clifford, don't you remember me?" she said.

Guy started and stared at her. And, as he did so, a strange expression passed over his face. A minute later he was on his feet.

"Yes, I do remember you," he cried. "You came to see me just before the race, didn't you? You told me . . . you told me—" He ran a hand over his brow. His memory was returning fast. The sudden shock of seeing Cicely had done it.



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"You told me that Jill had gone to Paris with that man Meredith for my sake," he went on. "You told me she had sold herself to him for a thousand pounds to keep you quiet because of what you knew about me."

Suddenly he was beside her, his hands on her shoulders, shaking her. "Is that true? You must tell me if it's true?"

"Yes, that's true," Cicely said. "Every word I told you was true, Mr. Clifford."

A moment later he started back from her. An amazed, bewildered expression passed over his face. "But—but Jill was here recently, wasn't she?" he stammered. "And they told me she was my wife. How can she be, if . . ."

Cicely shook her head. "She isn't your wife. They just got her to pretend to be your wife for a few days to save your reason. She's Drake Meredith's wife. He married her in Paris."

"What!" He stared at her as though he thought

she must be mad. "You can't know what you're saying," he muttered.

"But I do," she insisted. "She married him in Paris. I don't know why she did it, because she hates him. I know she hates him. It's you whom she loves, Mr. Clifford. She's always loved you!"

"Then why did she marry Drake Meredith?" Guy thundered.

"Perhaps he made her . . . because of that thousand pounds she borrowed, I suppose. But directly she heard of your accident she came back, didn't she? He followed her over. She's going to him, to his flat, this very night. He's forcing her to do it."

"You mean—as his wife?" Guy's face was deathly white. His voice shook.

Cicely nodded. "Yes, it's to be their honeymoon night. But if you love Jill, Mr. Clifford, you'll save her from him."

"But you say he's her husband," he muttered unsteadily.

"Yes, but she hates him. She hates him," she

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insisted. "It will be awful for her. Especially when she loves you as much as she does!"

Guy was silent a moment. He leant against the mantelshelf. Many things were becoming clear to him. Jill's queer behaviour these past few days. Yet to have lent herself to the deception at all, that must mean she loved him, mustn't it? And it was for his sake she had ever consented to go to Paris with that cur! Guy knew only too well just what sort of a man Drake Meredith was! The thought of Jill at his mercy was torture to him.

"You say she's going to his flat to-night?" He swung back towards Cicely.

Cicely nodded. "Yes, Mr. Clifford, and if you go there quickly, as quickly as you can, I'm sure you'll arrive in time. Oh, you will save her, won't you?" She seemed genuinely upset.

Guy's fists clenched. His face hardened dangerously. "Yes, I will—if she wants me to save her."

"I've got a taxi outside," Cicely breathed. "Don't tell them you're going. Perhaps they won't let you leave the hospital if you do. Just slip out the way I came in. There's no time to be lost, you know."

"Guy nodded. He would have agreed to anything, obsessed as he was by the thought of Jill in that cad's power. And she loved him! That was the awful part of it. Cicely had told him she did. And didn't all her actions prove it?"

"Whether she's his wife or not, he's not going to have her," he said savagely. "Not if she doesn't want to go to him!"

"That's right, Mr. Clifford," Cicely encouraged. "I'll just slip out now and wait for you in the taxi while you get ready."

She smiled in secret delight, as, a moment later, she ran across the darkened strip of lawn to where she saw the gleam of the taxicab's lights. She rather fancied Mr. Drake Meredith would get the surprise of his life to-night!

IT was already dark when Jill arrived at Drake's flat that evening. When the taxi drew up before the large expensive looking building she shivered. Drake was all prepared for her. The curtains of the windows were drawn, and shaded lamps diffused a faint golden glow in the room. In an alcove was a small dining-table set for two. It was lit by soft candle light, and, in a silver bucket of ice, stood a bottle of champagne.

"You see, my darling," he whispered, as he took her in his arms: "I've got everything ready—as I thought you'd like it. Kiss me, Jill."

He drew her towards him and she lay passive in his arms. She tried to suppress the shudder that went through her. She felt rather than saw the intense passionate gleam of his dark eyes. But, a moment later, he released her. He was holding himself in check.

"You'll want to come into the bedroom and change before supper, won't you?" he murmured. "Come, Jill."

He led her through a door into the bedroom. It was the most luxurious bedroom Jill had ever seen. The large bed was a mound of soft taffeta pillows; it had a fine lace cover. There was an attractive modern dressing-table and chairs; the carpet was deep and expensive.

"Our room, Jill," he whispered. "Our bridal room, darling."

Again that awful shudder went through her. She felt physically sick.

He went towards the wardrobe and threw it open. A lovely gold lace negligee hung there.

"For you to wear to-night, darling," he told her. "I chose it especially for you... for our first dinner together as husband and wife. You like it, don't you?"

"It is pretty," she murmured.

"I'll leave you to put it on and to unpack your things if you want to. After all," he gave a faint laugh, "you may as well unpack now. You'll have to later on. This is your rightful home now, darling."

He kissed her again and left her. For a few

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minutes Jill stood there quite still in the centre of the room, staring about her. This was her room now, *their* room, but she couldn't make herself believe it somehow.

The negligee was a lovely creation, yet when she first saw herself in the long hanging mirror, a hot flush rose to her temples. It was so daring! But she was afraid to take it off.

It took an effort of will power to force herself to

go back into the sitting-room. Drake rose from a deep luxurious lounge to meet her. He looked intensely dark and sinister.

At the sight of her a fierce, hungry gleam lit his dark eyes. "How lovely you are," he whispered. He took both her hands and drew her against him. He kissed her face, her throat.

"Why are you so unresponsive?" he demanded. Jill's sense of revulsion was stronger than ever. It was all she could do to prevent herself from crying out in protest.

He released her abruptly. She reeled against the couch. She almost fell. "You may feel differently when you've had some supper and champagne," he said savagely. "Some men may like cold women, but a woman as cold as you is not quite to my taste!"

It was an awful meal. The food was delicious, caviare, cold chicken in aspic, pate de fois gras, but Jill could scarcely bring herself to eat a thing. The thought of what must happen was like a great weight pressing her down.

"This is certainly a cheerful meal!" Drake's lips curled angrily. "Can't you say something? Have some champagne."

She forced herself to drink some, although it almost choked her. But, instead of making her feel gay it only depressed her more.

The meal was over at last. Drake drew her down on to a couch. "Now you can make love to me, my sweetheart," he muttered. "Kiss me as though you meant it . . . put your arms about me. Come, my little love, I'm waiting."

Jill tried. Honestly she did. After all he was her husband. But she couldn't bring herself to do it, she couldn't!

"Well?" he muttered savagely. "What's the

matter with you? Come and kiss me. I won't be patient too long!"

"I—I can't," she whispered. Her face was deathly white, her lips trembled.

He caught hold of her arm. "Why can't you? Because you love Guy Clifford?"

"Yes." Despite herself she couldn't keep the cry back.

"Oh, you do, do you?" He was enraged, suddenly.

"You shall suffer for that," he said through tightly clenched teeth. "You are mine now, my wife, and I shall do what I like with you. Do you see that hunting crop hanging over there? Well, I shall use it—if necessary. Come, are you going to kiss me?"

She struggled away from him. "No! Let me go, you beast!"

But he only laughed. He strode across the room and took down the whip from the wall.

"I'll show you who's master," he ground out furiously. He lifted the whip. He struck her once. Jill buried her face in her hands, but she wouldn't cry out. She wouldn't let him know the pain and humiliation she was suffering. She'd rather die.

That minute there came the sound of a commotion in the hall. Drake swung towards the door, still holding the whip.

"I told that fool Mason not to let anyone in," he muttered savagely. He sprang towards the door to keep it shut. But he was too late. The door was flung open. There stood Guy Clifford!

Will Jill refuse to leave Drake? Or will she dare the scorn of the world and go to the man she loves? Do not miss the next vivid, long instalment. Order your copy of "Betty's Paper" to-day.

SHOULD A BRIDE FORGIVE?

(Continued from Page 7.)

"MOST honourable, please to come this way!"

The servant, blue-clad, with the thousand-year-old crest of the Li's upon his shoulder, kow-towed almost to the ground before Tom White.

It was a week later and Tom had, after a long and trying journey up the great river, presented himself at the home of the great Li Chu, his friend.

The journey itself had been a revelation to Tom, despite his desperate mood. The teeming life of the great river, the inexpressible beauty of the ever-changing scenes, had been a surprise even to a man who knew China, and was thinking now only of one thing—would Li Chu lend him enough money to save him?

Now that he had reached Li Chu's house itself his wonder was increased a hundredfold, and, craven-hearted and desperate though he was, he found himself full of envy and desire. He had known that Li Chu was rich, while they were both undergraduates at Oxford, years before. He had learned more positively since he had come to China five years ago to work for Samuel Mostyn, that Li Chu was a great man, a nobleman of supreme position, whose word was law to many thousands, whose friendship was beyond price.

Well, that friendship should be put to good use

now. He, Tom, often sneered at the "yellow devil," but this yellow devil should be fleeced well and truly, if he, Tom, knew his work.

As he moved slowly along behind the blue-clad servant through a path bordered with great porcelain tubs of glorious azaleas, he felt that he was in another world. On every side of him the gardens of the great lord Li Chu spread out in a blaze of beauty.

Everywhere about him was running water, water bridged by tiny bridges, lined by tiny, dwarf trees. Queer, odd-shaped pagodas sprang up on every side, small and large; a make-believe world within a world.

Passing through a great hall, where other blue-clad servants bent themselves to the ground before the honoured guest of their great lord, the servant halted before a door, carved in a million fantastic figures. Thrice he bowed, and then softly opened. A voice, low and soft and wonderfully modulated, greeted them:

"My dear fellow, come in! How charming of you to deign to come all this way to my palace!"

Tom had started violently. His nerves were on edge. But in a moment he collected his wits.

Yes, there was Li Chu, his old friend. At first, however, he scarcely recognised the magnificent figure that greeted him.

Li Chu was tall for a Chinese, and handsome. His skin was not much more brown than Tom's, his eyes dark and soft and very friendly. Tom had last seen him at Oxford. He found him now a great lord in his own home.

He wore a stiffly embroidered robe of lemon-coloured silk. Jewels, such as pearls, emeralds and diamonds, blazed upon his skull-cap and upon his shoes. Standing there alone, he represented a fortune beyond the dreams of avarice, and yet his manners were utterly simple as he gripped both Tom's hands and pressed them hard.

"Why have you taken so long to come to me?" he was saying. "I offer you welcome!"

Tom nervously put out a hand. It was obvious that Li Chu had not forgotten the bonds of friendship of the old days at Oxford. He had always heard that a Chinese never forgets a friend. Now he believed it was true. His relief was tremendous. Li Chu would surely lend him the money he *must* have. He was thinking all the while of nothing else.

"My word," he exclaimed, looking about him, "you've got a fine place here, Li."

Li Chu bent his head just a little.

"My home is at your disposal, Tom," he said. "I hope you will honour me and it by staying as long as you can?"

"I'd like to," replied Tom, quickly, "but I'll have to be in Hong Kong almost at once."

"I'm devastated to hear that."

"I—er—I've got a lot of business to which I must attend," Tom hinted, "things are rotten just now. One scarcely knows which way to turn."

As he said this he watched the Chinese to see what effect it had. But he might have known a Chinese better. Li's face was politely impassive.

"I am sorry to hear that. And I believe you have other news, more happy, Tom. Are you not to be married very shortly to the beautiful Miss Marcelle Lang?"

Tom started violently. It was startling to find that Li Chu knew so much about him. Did he, perhaps, know too much: know that he owed money all over Hong Kong; that his books with old Mostyn were in an appalling mess? But no—no one could know that!

"You know about Marcelle, Li?" he said with an effort.

Li placed a hand upon the other's shoulder.

"Of course, I know," he said. "As soon as I had your word that you would honour my humble home with your honourable presence, Tom, I made haste to acquaint myself with all those matters which might be of interest to us while you are here. Come, you were my friend in England, and I can never forget that. Sit down, and tell me all your news!"

As he spoke he held out a chair for Tom, an exquisite thing of carved dragons, and priceless ivory. Tom sank into it with a smile, not quite sure of himself.

"You are very kind, Li," Tom murmured, "but then you always were."

Li bent his head politely. His hands were hidden in the folds of his silken robe.

"I always try to remember my friends," he

(Continued on next page.)

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HE HAD BETRAYED HIS BEST FRIEND'S SISTER!

SHOULD A BRIDE FORGIVE?

(Continued from previous page.)

said. "That is why you should not have been so worried about coming to me in times of trouble."

Tom flushed. The beads of perspiration stood out on his brow. He was utterly amazed. Was there any secret Li Chu did not know?

"I don't understand—" he stammered.

"Please let me explain. I know that for some years you have been working for Samuel Mostyn, a man of estimable character, but perhaps not over generous in the way he pays his staff. I know that life for a young Englishman in Hong Kong can be very expensive, and that you have not found it easy. Forgive me, but I know that you are in certain financial difficulties."

Already He Had Forgotten The Girl He Was To Marry!

"GOOD Heavens!" cried Tom, craven fear in his eyes. "What don't you know, Li?"

The face of the Chinese was inscrutable.

"Do not worry," he said. "I am merely suggesting that as you are to wed a lovely and virtuous young lady, you will wish to make a good start, and therefore it is with very great pleasure that I beg you to accept this, my wedding gift."

As he spoke one of his hands, the inch-long nails guarded with golden shields, emerged from the sleeve of his jacket. In it he held a slip of paper, and this he offered to Tom.

"My God, Li," Tom jumped to his feet, amazed, "you know more about me than I do about myself. I—this is terribly good of you, but"—he glanced down at the cheque, and his evil heart gave a leap—"a thousand pounds! I cannot accept all that!"

He stood staring at the figures on the cheque. A thousand pounds! At least that would put his books right with old Mostyn, and leave him a little over. It was a start. But this fool of a Chinese was evidently good for more. His mind was already trying to calculate how much. No sense of gratitude held him. How much—how much more could he get, he asked himself? If he played his cards carefully, surely another thousand before he started back for Hong Kong.

Li's hand was on his shoulder.

"You are my friend," he said. "I beg you to speak no more of this trifling matter. It is a great privilege to help a friend. Now come and let me show you my home."

So leading the way, a charming host and a generous friend, he took Tom from the room, with its red lacquered roof, its wondrous musician's balcony of sandalwood, out through one courtyard into another, through room after room, so that before long Tom began to be filled with envy and greed. A man who owned all this could afford to lend him thousands—if only he played his own cards well!

Then suddenly as they stepped into a courtyard, in which the golden sunshine was flirting with the

silver water of a jade-hewn fountain, there was the sound of a girlish laugh. They stopped, and Li Chu smiled.

"Ah! here is my sister, Li Soo. I am glad we have found her, Tom. The only member of my family, and dear to me beyond life. I have often told her about you, and I am glad that you should meet her, so that she can welcome you to our humble home."

In front of them stood a girl.

Tom held his breath. Never had he seen a Chinese girl so rarely beautiful, never one who smiled up so prettily into his eyes.

Li Soo! She stood by a lotus-basin, more lovely than any of its blooms, smiling happily, as she plucked at the red flower in her hand. Her wonderful hair was black and shining, while in it glinted jade pins. Her silken coat and trousers were simple—and yet of exquisite material. Her eyes, like her brother's, were large and amber-hued.

"This is my friend, Tom White," said Li Chu, proudly, "my sister."

Tom looked down into the smiling little face, and something stirred within him. He felt, too, that she was moved. What an adorable little creature. Well worth a journey up the river for her sake! As lovely as the cherry blossoms about her. She was gazing at him as though he were a strange prince come to woo her. His vanity surged up. No need to hurry back now. He'd stay as long as he possibly could. Li Soo should amuse him!

No sense of decency or gratitude to his host troubled him. All such sentiments were foreign to him, and in any case had been swept aside as he looked into that exquisite little face, and realised, as only men as evil as Tom White can realise, that Li Soo was very innocent—and might easily believe all he said.

THE girl stirred lazily in the man's arms, smiling softly from her amber-coloured eyes. The shadows were deepening across Li Chu's garden, and within the pagoda where the lovers were resting darkness had come to soften the shame of stolen love.

"Are you happy, Li Soo?" Tom White whispered, as he held the exquisite morsel of silken femininity to him.

"So happy, my lord," the girl replied, "that I scarce dare speak, in case it should all be a dream."

Tom laughed softly, and kissed her again and again upon the lips.

No real shame passed through his heart, no thought of the innocent love of his friend's sister, stolen, trampled for all time in the mud of worthless passion; nor any thought of Marcelle who waited for him in Hong Kong. Nothing save the beauty of this Chinese garden, the exquisite thrill of this stolen love-affair with the prettiest girl he had ever seen in China.

As for Li Soo—she had not yet had time to reckon up the cost of love. She had met Tom White a week ago, honourably introduced to her by her brother, Li Chu, as his oldest and closest friend, and she had loved him at once, naturally,

completely. Her trust had been as complete as a child's.

"Come," she said suddenly, twisting herself, like a lithe flower from the strong arms which held her, "we must go back to the house. My honourable brother will return at any moment now, and he must not find us here."

Tom laughed.

"That's all right, dearest," he said, "he trusts me. Just one more kiss. I've got to return to Hong Kong soon, and then—"

"Then my heart will be empty for my lord, and the days will be dark."

"You little darling!"

So engrossed were they both in love's sweetest hour that neither of them saw the two figures approaching through the twilight. They had no thought for anything save their love. But there, crossing the tiny bridge, across the lotus pond, came two men. An aged gardener, who held his master's honour dear—and Li Chu himself.

Following the sinuous path they came at last close to the pagoda itself, and its guilty secret. Behind them in the miniature lake the blood-red lilies seemed to tremble, while a bright-hued bird in its jade cage cried suddenly on the night in fear.

"Go!" whispered Li, and his servant vanished like a shadow.

For a moment or two Li stood white and grim, his hands folded in front of him. He was suffering as he had never done. Not only had the thing he loved best in this world, his sister Li Soo, proven worthless, but friendship had been abused in his own house.

With one sigh, unheard save by the night, the mandarin stepped into the pagoda and spoke.

"So!"

With an oath Tom leaped to his feet. His hand went to his side, but he was without a weapon, and even as he met Li Chu's cold eyes, that hand fell in shame. He needed no weapon—yet. He needed only some shield to hide from him the scorn in his friend's eyes.

Li Soo had scarcely moved. She had been kneeling close held in Tom's arms, when her brother had appeared. Then with one swift movement she had twisted round, and was now bending to the ground at his very feet.

"Look here, Li—" Tom began at last. "Don't misunderstand this. Li Soo and I love one another, and—"

"Silence!"

Li's voice was terrible, but not half so terrible as the pain in his eyes.

He took no notice of his sister, but gazed only on the man who had so basely returned his friendship.

"You need not lie to me," he said bitterly, "I know all. I have servants, who are, it would seem, more faithful than my friends. When first a few minutes ago I was told all, I could not believe it. But I now see the guilt in your faces. This is how you have returned my friendship, Mr. White, and have abused my hospitality. I thank you"—his voice trembled with emotion—"you could not have treated your worst enemy more cruelly. We Li's have always been proud of our women. Of good

(Continued on next page.)

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SHOULD A BRIDE FORGIVE?

(Continued from previous page.)

women we are born, and good women we marry. And you, my friend, have decreed that all that shall be as nothing. I the last of the Li's! My sister—my only living relative—your *plaything*!”

His emotion was too much for him, and for a moment he covered his face with his hands.

Tom tried to speak.

“Li, I swear I love Li Soo, and—”

“You lie! You love your English sweetheart, Miss Lang, whom you are to marry next month!”

A moan came from the stricken Chinese girl. Li looked down at her with contempt and pity.

“No, I do not suppose that you honoured my sister with that side of the story,” his voice grew terrible. “But enough! You are my guest, and I might forget that if you stayed much longer. I ask of you only one thing—go, and go quickly! My servants shall lead you. But go.”

Tom made one last effort. His terror was pitiful to behold. He could scarcely speak because of his shaking lips. Li Soo, braver than he, was sobbing quietly.

“Won't you listen to me, Li?” he begged.

“I dare not. Were I to listen to you, I would forget the laws which make me your host. So now, go. You will hear of me again, Tom White,” the dark eyes rested long upon the trembling Englishman. “I shall strike, and I shall strike hard. As you have destroyed the honour of my name, so shall I destroy the honour of yours. Now—go!”

Tom could not move. Craven fear gripped at his heart. His lips shook. A moan of horror escaped him. He knew only too well that Li Chu would carry out his word. He knew only too well what Chinese vengeance could be, how ruthless, how fiendishly cruel. And Li Chu would be revenged!

He gave no thought to the poor little creature he had broken and wronged. Terror seized him, and still moaning, still casting despairing glances in Li Chu's direction, he turned and stumbled away through the dark gardens, past the lotus pond, towards the river, while the sound of a girl's pitiful sobbing followed him through the night.

“He Isn't Worthy Of Your Love!”

“YOU are wrong, Marcelle, dreadfully wrong. You are fighting against love, and that is always wrong. Let me go to White and tell him the truth. He is a man. He'll get over it. Besides”—Dick hesitated for a moment, hating to say what came to his mind—“besides, he knows as well as everyone else knows that he is utterly unworthy of you.”

Marcelle sat very white and silent at Dick Bryce's side in Mrs. Lister's drawing-room, one evening after dinner. Dick's boat had returned to Hong Kong that morning after a brief cruise in Chinese waters. Without, the dark blue bay glistened in the perfect night. Everything was very still and quiet. The bungalow might have been deserted, though they both knew that the Listers were somewhere close at hand.

Marcelle shook her head.

“Dick, you make it so hard. You know I love you, but I am to be married to Tom next week. He had my promise. Since he came back to Hong Kong no one could have been more subdued and quiet. I believe he is trying to behave and is sorry about the past. Oh Dick, you do believe I love you, don't you?”

Sudden emotion caused the girl to turn and hold out her arms to him. In another moment Dick had clasped her to him.

“Yes, I believe you love me, my darling, and I believe that you are cruel—cruel—”

“But, darling, I can't help myself. Tom has my promise. I must keep it. Why, I feel so guilty at these stolen hours we spend together. They should all be his.”

Dick kissed her on the lips.

“If I am making you unhappy, little girl, I must go. I'll apply to be sent home—”

“Oh, no, Dick, stay in China as long as you can!” Marcelle sobbed.

Dick smiled.

“How cruel a woman can be! All right, I'll stay—and I'll be on hand in case you want me.” Suddenly he let her go, and jumped to his feet. “But enough of this, Marcelle. We are only human, both of us. We can't go on seeing one another like this. I'd better go.”

Marcelle struggled to her feet. At such moments she simply felt that she could not let him go. She loved him so much. She knew now that this *was* love. Her affection for Tom White had been something very different. It had been attraction, and a desire to get away from her dreary London life to the glamour of the East.

But her love for Dick Bryce was something quite different. It was exquisite pain, and it was joy unspeakable. It left her dull with misery, and yet exalted her above all things. And it had come to her *too late*!

“Yes, dear,” she whispered, as she laid a hand on his arm, “you had better go. Quite apart from the fact that it makes me feel a cheat, Tom is coming soon. He is taking me out somewhere this evening.”

Dick did not move. He was white with pent-up emotion. His hands were clenched; the muscles of his jaw were set.

“This is good-bye, my dear,” he said. “When next we meet you will be married. But always, Marcelle, I shall love you.”

“And I you, my dear,” she breathed. “If only we had met sooner.”

“If only life were kinder,” he said, and then suddenly turned and walked out into the silent night.

Marcelle did not move. Dick would never hold her in his arms again...

And she was waiting now for Tom to come and take her out.

AT that moment, if Marcelle had known it, Tom was for once showing a very slight degree of manhood.

He was standing, with his hands bound behind him, in front of Li Chu. He was white and deadly afraid, but he was actually defying the Chinese.

That evening just as he had started out to go to Marcelle, he had been seized in the very streets of Hong Kong. It had all been done so quickly and with such superlative skill that there had been scarcely a sound. Those who had seen the rickshaw overturned, had heard the one stifled shout, had thought that it was no more than a drunken brawl.

But Tom had known differently. In one agonising moment of terror he had realised that this was the work of—*Li Chu*!

And here he was in *Li Chu*'s house on the edge of the city, bound, and facing his enemy.

"You will write as I dictate," said *Li Chu* coldly, and clapped his hands.

Two blue-clad giants stepped suddenly into the room, and went up to Tom.

"No—no—" he screamed.

But *Li Chu* stopped him with a sneer.

"There is no need for terror—yet. I am giving you this chance. Sit down and write, or you will have good reason to scream in agony."

Shaking, Tom sat down at the desk between them. His hands had been unbound by the men. They stood close behind him. He looked about him, then up at *Li*, and suddenly he seized a pen.

"Go on—you devil!" he muttered.

Li Chu's face was utterly impassive. It would have been impossible to guess from it that he was suffering almost as acutely as his victim, if not from fear, from remorse at the thought that he had ever trusted *Li Soo* to such a man.

"Write these words," he commanded.

Then slowly he dictated:

My Darling,

I am so sorry I can't see you, as I am delayed for half-an-hour. Will you please come to the Club in this car? By that time I shall be ready for a wonderful evening. All my love.

TOM.

With an effort Tom finished writing the last words, and then with a cry of rage jumped to his feet, flinging the pen from him.

"You fiend!" he cried. "What are you going to do to her?"

The guards had seized him. He struggled for a moment, but he was bound and gagged now. With horror-stricken eyes he stared at the impassive Chinese. *Li* might have been attending to a very trifling matter of business. He picked up the letter, glanced through it, and then nodded.

"You shall remain here for the present," he said to Tom. "It may please me to let you see that Miss Lang has obeyed your summons, and has walked into my web as my poor sister walked into your evil trap."

He made a gesture, and Tom, struggling violently, was taken away.

MARCELLE read the note through and glanced at Mrs. Lister.

"Tom is really trying to be good to me these days," she said. "He's sent that car for me. I never saw such a beautiful one."

"You're a lucky girl," said Mrs. Lister. "I do

believe that Tom White is going to settle down once you are married."

"So do I."

"Well, don't keep him waiting, dear."

Marcelle ran up to her room to find a wrap. Outside in the starry night stood *Li Chu*'s high-powered car. It glimmered like a living thing in the night, its mighty engine throbbing. A Chinese chauffeur sat at the wheel. In five minutes they were speeding through the night—Marcelle drinking in its glories, and trying to forget that her heart was breaking.

They reached the outskirts of Hong Kong, and suddenly the car swept through gates which were already open—and then closed. Marcelle sat forward quickly. This was *not* the Club. A tremor of fear gripped her. But at that moment the car pulled up at the door of a large house.

And there stood a Chinese, awaiting her.

"Miss Lang," he said softly, and helped her from the car.

Marcelle hung back a little.

"I do not understand," she said. "My fiancé, Mr. White, sent for me—"

"Pardon me, I will explain. Mr White is a friend of mine, and is within. This is my humble home, and I welcomed you to it. Mr. White wished you to see a real Chinese entertainment," he paused and looked down at her, "and I think that we shall entertain you, to-night."

Wonderingly, and yet still without suspicion, the girl entered the house. Everything was in

(Continued on next page.)

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SHOULD A BRIDE FORGIVE?*(Continued from previous page.)*

perfect taste, everywhere there were signs of great luxury, but over everything hung a deadly silence.

At her side was the silent Chinese, who watched her without the slightest emotion showing in his eyes.

A servant threw open a door, and she entered, still followed by Li Chu. The door closed, and they were alone. The room was all in red. Great painted dragons adorned the walls, leering at her. The scent of incense permeated the air. She turned quickly.

"Where is Mr. White, and who are you?" she asked.

Li Chu pointed to a carved chair.

"Please sit down, Miss Lang.

Marcelle flushed at the tone, but suddenly fear came to her, and she sat down.

"Who are you," she whispered, with a quiver in her voice, "and why am I here?"

Li Chu began to speak:

"My name is Li Chu. Once an Englishman, Tom White, was my friend—"

"Yes, yes, he has told me. He went to see you, Mr. Li. Oh, Tom hasn't done anything?"

"Wait!"

The mandarin's face was almost ashen.

"Tom White came to see me at my house in the country a few weeks ago. He took money from me. I gave him one thousand pounds, knowing that he needed it, and he asked for and received another thousand. But what is money?" he sneered. "It is mud for thieves to play with!"

Marcelle did not move; could not speak. The eyes of the Chinese never left her face, and so cold, so impassive were they, that they struck terror into her very heart.

What had Tom done?

"I welcomed White as my honoured guest, and I was proud, very proud to do so. I thought that he was a friend, and an English gentleman," suddenly the passionless voice broke, "and I have found that he was a traitor!"

"Oh, please go on quickly, Mr. Li," Marcelle began, "this is torture—"

"Torture!" Li sneered. "I am glad to hear that, Miss Lang, because that is why you are here. To be tortured, as Tom White tortured my sister."

"Your sister!" whispered Marcelle, pitifully. She struggled to her feet. She guessed the rest.

The mandarin's voice went on:

"My sister, Li Soo, was the one being in this

world I loved, Miss Lang. She was as beautiful as yourself, and more innocent than the cherry blossom. I loved her and honoured and lived for her, and I was proud to introduce her to my friend. And in return for what I did for him, what did he do?"

"Oh, no—no!" Marcelle hid her face. "Tom isn't as bad as that—"

"He betrayed her. He made her his plaything. He trapped her with his lies and his cunning words and his false promises." His voice grew very low. "We Chinese do not forgive such insults. I, the last of the Li's, have sent for you to-day, that I might revenge my sister's memory. I forced your craven fiancé to write that note. Rather than die like the dog he is, he wrote, and enticed you here—where you stand."

Marcelle was trembling violently. She put out a hand in desperate appeal.

"I did not do this thing—"

"No—but he did, and you must pay. See?"

He took a step forward, and suddenly swept aside a long scarlet curtain of the heaviest velvet. As he did so Marcelle gave a scream.

There on a bier of pure white flowers lay the still form of a young Chinese girl. Embalmed in death she looked white and exquisitely beautiful. Her hands were crossed on her breast, and upon her lips was a little smile.

"Li Soo!" whispered the girl, as she stared through a blinding mist of tears.

"Li Soo, my sister," said a soft voice beside her, "as beautiful a maiden as ever lived. And now dead!"

"How did she die?" whispered Marcelle.

Li looked down at her. His eyes were dark with passion and pain. He could scarcely breathe as he hissed out his words.

"She died because honour demanded that she should die, Miss Lang. And it is honour, the honour of the Li's that demands that you shall pay for her death. Look on her and understand my meaning. As she paid, so shall you pay! Through you shall she be revenged! As she amused for one hour the Englishman's whim, so shall you amuse me—and so too in the end shall you die!"

Will Li Chu keep his terrible threat? Will Marcelle be forced to suffer at his merciless hands? Do not miss the next breath-taking chapters of this sensational new serial. It is the most colourful, daring serial ever written. Order your copy of next week's

"Betty's Paper" NOW!

WHAT HIS LOVE MEANT*(Continued from page 14.)*

a girl that night—drove her back here to Cliff Bay—because she'd been treated in a cruel and cowardly way by the blackguard who took her to that club."

And then simply and briefly he told the story—only leaving out mention of Ralph's name. A slight sneer curved Cynthia's lips as he ended.

"Very nicely explained," she drawled. "But d'you really expect me to believe such a fairy-tale, Geoff?"

His firm jaw hardened suddenly.

"I'm not in the habit of lying, Cynthia."

"Oh, well." She shrugged her shoulders. "We won't argue about it. I suppose when men have what they call 'a good time' with a girl of that class they think it their duty to shield her!"

"You're bitterly unjust, Cynthia!" Geoff broke in abruptly. "I thought you would have a little fellow-feeling for Miss Brooke—a girl like yourself!"

"Like myself!" Cynthia's voice cut ice-sharp across the words, her lips tightened to a thin line.

"Thanks for the compliment! You flatter me, Geoff, comparing me to this—this slum girl! But I won't stand it! This is the end!"

"Cynthia!" Geoff took a step forward, his face whitening. "You don't mean—"

"I do. This last week I've been wondering if our engagement was a mistake—our ideas are so entirely different. But this has quite decided me. I'm not competing with a low-class girl picked up at a night-club! You can go back to her! No, please don't say any more! It's useless. I shall not alter my mind."

To Geoff's flood of passionate protest and pleading, she remained cold, scornful, and unmoved. Finally, she swept out of the lounge, leaving him with the stunned sense of a man who has received a smashing blow.

BUT once out of sight, a triumphant smile parted Cynthia's lips. "I did that rather well!" she congratulated herself. "That anonymous letter coming just when it did, gave me the very excuse I needed for breaking off my engagement."

For callous, heartless, and utterly selfish Cynthia had never loved Geoff. She had only accepted him on account of his virile good looks and the fact that he was the richest man of her acquaintance.

During this last week in London, however, she had met someone twice as rich as Geoff and owning a title. He had obviously admired Cynthia, and she felt that he only needed encouragement to propose.

Now, free to give him that encouragement, she turned into the writing-room, to send him a carefully worded note hinting that his society would be very welcome at Cliff Bay!

And meanwhile Geoff stood alone in the empty lounge, feeling as though his world had toppled about him!

He had loved Cynthia passionately, believed in her utterly. And the bitter disillusionment was like physical pain.

Presently he moved. He passed out through the hotel entrance and walked along aimlessly, hardly knowing where he went, never realising how time passed—fighting with that fierce pain.

That evening found him at the end of the pier, gazing unseeingly at the dark green water lapping the pier-supports. And Gillie, taking a moonlight

walk on the pier after a busy day, saw that big muscular figure standing there—and caught her breath!

"Mr. Denver!"

The words escaped her almost unconsciously. Wheeling round with a start, Geoff looked down into the girl's lovely, vivid face.

"I'm so glad to see you! I mean—I wanted so much to say how grateful I am to you for—helping me again the other afternoon," Gillie began disjointedly, then broke off in swift, impulsive concern at sight of his drawn, set face. "Oh, what is it? Are you ill?"

III! If this girl only knew what his championship of her had cost him! Love—happiness—everything that seemed worth while in his life! Geoff drew a hard breath and tried to smile.

"I've had some bad news. And it—hurt a bit."

"Oh!" said Gillie, in a whisper. But her heart was throbbing with sympathy. "I'm sorry! You've been so good to me! If only there was anything I could do—to help."

She stopped, while her passionately eager gaze rested on his drawn face. And as though in answer Geoff stretched out his hand almost gropingly.

"Will you stay here with me for a bit? It's ghastly, being alone."

Without a word she clasped her fingers round his, warmly, earnestly, trying to convey in that clasp her sympathy and longing to help him. And

so they stood for long minutes without speaking—while the knowledge of this girl's sweet, frank companionship and understanding stole like a warmth round Geoff's heart.

Gillie and Geoff saw much of one another in the weeks which followed.

In his loneliness and fierce suffering, Geoff turned desperately to Gillie. Her vivid youth and warm sympathy was like a healing tonic. And to Gillie—those weeks were sheer, wonderful happiness!

For she knew that she loved this big, strong man who had turned to her for comfort! She asked nothing better than to spend her few spare hours with him! Good times! Dancing, theatres, night-clubs! Who wanted them? Just to be with Geoff—sitting on the warm sands, swimming in the sunlit sea, walking along the moonlit pier was happiness enough!

So she lived vividly in the present, giving no

We Wonder—

GOSSIP

—About Our Pals.

—If it is true that the Rhymney blonde is taking cookery lessons?

—And has it anything to do with what the boy from New Tredegar said about wanting a wife who could cook?

—Why the Northwick girl has given up saying she knows how to handle men?

—Who the Southport girl was waiting for last Saturday night?

—Why the Stockton girl blushes whenever Redcar is mentioned and refuses to talk about her holiday there?

—Why the Edinburgh girl visits the Post Office so often lately?

—And what she will do when she finds that the good-looking boy is only there on holiday duty?

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thought to the future—till one evening she was brought face to face with it, with paralysing suddenness!

They were sitting in a sheltered nook and Geoff had been talking of his great ranch in Canada. All at once, he turned to her.

"I shall have to go back there soon," he said, abruptly.

Go back! Go away from England! The warm colour fled from the girl's face, her heart seemed to stop beating—then gave a great leap as Geoff's strong, tanned hand closed suddenly over hers.

"Gillie, you've been the sweetest, most loyal pal a man could have," he told her, his deep voice throbbing with feeling. "I don't know how I'd have carried on without you—these last weeks. Will you marry me, dear?"

He was asking her to be his wife! To be with him always! Gillie caught her breath, while the flood of rapture swept her from head to foot! He had not said he loved her, but in the thrill of that wonderful moment the girl never noticed it! She loved him—loved him with every fibre of her being! And that love shone in her clear, lovely eyes raised to his.

"If you want me," she said unsteadily. And could say no more because Geoff's great arms were round her. Her eyes closed in the thrilling sweetness of the moment as his lips met hers.

Happy—so happy!

He Was Only Marrying Her To Save Her Good Name!

THE days following were wonderful for Gillie. She seemed to be living in a sort of fairy-tale.

But at the end of the week Geoff went up to London to settle some business matters, and make arrangements for a quiet wedding.

"I'll be back in a few days," he told her. "Three or four at most."

"Four days!" Gillie echoed the words impulsively. "It'll seem an awful long time to me, Geoff!"

The frank sweetness of her, the look in her clear eyes, sent an odd thrill through Geoff's pulses. They were standing in the sheltering passage-way beside her shabby lodgings, and with a swift movement, he drew her closely into his arms and kissed her.

Then with the soft warmth of her lips still lingering on his, he strode out into the narrow street—almost colliding with a man coming from the opposite direction.

"Oh, it's you!" ejaculated a voice he recognised. And wheeling sharply, Geoff found himself face to face with Ralph Stanway!

The two men had not met since the fateful encounter on the sands. For a moment they eyed each other silently. Then Ralph spoke with a slight, sneering smile curving his handsome lips.

"I've been wondering if I'd run up against you," he drawled. "Congratulations on your—er—second engagement. But it's a big drop from Mayfair to the East End, eh?"

Geoff's eyes went steel-hard, his jaw set. "What do you mean?" he asked in dangerously quiet tones.

"I hear that the beautiful Cynthia Deane has thrown you over, and you've consoled yourself with that little girl you took—er—pity on at the night-club, Gillie Brooke!" explained Ralph with the triumphant sneer deepening on his face. "Bit of a contrast!"

"Stop!" Geoff's voice cut suddenly across the words like a whiplash, his eyes blazed. "Dare to speak in that tone of my future wife, and I'll thrash you as I did before! You cowardly, low-down swine! It was you who sent that vile, anonymous letter to Cynthia at the Grand Hotel—poisoned her mind with those lies."

"You knew that I could not explain the whole truth about that matter! If Cynthia had learned that it was you who was Gillie's companion at that night-club, the affair would probably have come to your wife's ears and she would have used it as evidence in that divorce she is trying to get from you! An innocent, helpless girl's name would have been dragged in the mud! Get out of my sight before I throw you into the gutter—you black-guard!"

He took a quick step forward, as he ended, clenching his hands. And with suddenly whitening face, Ralph swerved aside. But he was smiling triumphantly as he went on down the street. He'd hit back at that Puritanical prig!

He didn't hear a quickly caught breath, as he went past a narrow passage-way! He didn't see a girl's slender figure flattened against the dingy wall. For Gillie hadn't gone straight in to her shabby room when Geoff left her. She had stolen out to see the last of him, down the narrow street and had seen his meeting with Ralph and heard every word!

Cynthia Deane has thrown you over. . . . Consoled yourself with Gillie Brooke. . . . Anonymous letter. . . . Poisonous lies. . . . An innocent girl's name dragged in the mud. . . .

Fragments of what she had heard, beat upon Gillie's brain while she crouched there, and slowly, painfully her confused thoughts grew clear.

Oh, she understood it all now! That evening when she had come upon Geoff, on the pier, Cynthia Deane, the girl he loved had just thrown him over, because of her, Gillie! She had been a fool, and he had shielded her from the terrible consequences at the cost of his own happiness!

"No, no," she told herself wildly. "I must tell the truth!" But that thought brought an agony that wrenched her very heart strings. To clear Geoff meant to give him back to that other girl—sacrifice her own happiness. And she loved him—loved him!

Through a sleepless night, Gillie fought her bitter battle but in the morning her mind was made up. She would go to Cynthia Deane and tell her the truth.

SO the next afternoon found Gillie in the luxurious entrance lounge of the Grand Hotel, quietly asking for Miss Cynthia Deane. And Cynthia,

trailing down in response to the message, stared in surprise at the slim, lovely girl, in her cheap clothes and with the great shadows beneath her eyes, who awaited her.

"You wished to speak to me?" she queried with haughtily raised brows. "Who are you?"

Gillie's white face flushed.

"My name's Gillie Brooke," she said simply. "You don't know me, but—I had to come."

And then as briefly as she could and with no sign of the pain it cost her, Gillie told the whole truth of the happenings at the dance-club on that fatal night.

"I'd never seen Geoff before that evening," she ended. "He was just kind—because I'd been a fool, going about with Ralph Stanway, a married man, though I didn't know it till then! Geoff acted as he did to save me from being mixed up in a—divorce case." The confession was torture to her proud, sensitive nature, but she went through with it, bravely, steadily. "That's all. I had to tell

(Continued on page 2.)

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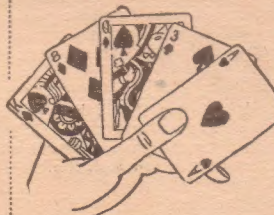
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CONCLUSION OF

BORN TO BE BAD

SLOWLY Di came forward. There was nothing else to do. Hounslow had seen her. He knew she was there. She was utterly at his mercy.

"Hullo, David," she faltered through chattering teeth. "So you're out?"

"Yes, I am out." He looked at her sternly. "And I have seen Robinson, who told me all he knew. That's why I am here—to see you."

Di shrank away from him.

"Why did you write me that string of lies about being in love with someone else?" he demanded.

Di did not speak. David Hounslow was the only man she had ever feared, the only other man besides Launch who had ever touched her hard heart.

"Are you in love with someone else, Di?" He shot the question at her fiercely.

"No, no," she gasped, terrified that he meant her harm, and telling herself that it would be useless to scream for help because before help came it would all be over.

"You had better tell me everything, Di," he said sternly. "Everything that has happened to you since that night when I did not give you away."

Under the spell of those commanding, compelling eyes she began to talk. Now and then he asked a curt question. Grimly he forced the whole story out of her, even as to how she happened to be hiding in the summer-house at that moment. She had to tell him. He made her tell him.

He nodded when the sorry tale was done, and nervously Di moistened her hot, dry lips.

"David," she murmured. "David—please—"

He cut short her plea.

"You think I am going to hurt you, but I am not," he said quietly. "I love you—and I believe you still love me. Anyway, whether you love me or not, I am going to make it my duty to make you go straight in future."

Di stared.

"I wrote to you and told you that I had turned over a new leaf, Di. That was perfectly true. I have learnt my lesson. I have turned over a new leaf—and you are going to turn over a new leaf, too. With me, Di."

It was a strange love-making!

"You are not going to do the job you came here to do to-night," he went on. "Neither you nor I are going to be mixed up in that sort of job any more."

You have treated me very badly, but I forgive you, because I love you. Only listen, Di, don't ever treat me badly again. Understand?"

She nodded, and once more moistened her lips.

"I am going to take charge of you. What you want is a master—I am going to be your master!"

He laid both hands on her shoulders, and his eyes seemed to bore right into her soul.

"We have both gone off the rails, but in future we keep straight. Swear it, Di!"

"I swear it," she faltered, almost in spite of herself. He was her master—he could bend her to his will. For good or evil she must do as he told her—and she knew it, at last!

"David—I am sorry—forgive me," she faltered.

"I have told you that I have forgiven you. Let the past be forgotten. My past and yours have been buried to-night."

He drew her to him and kissed her.

"You are coming with me now to be married as soon as possible, and then we are both going to Canada to start afresh," he said with a masterful tenderness. "No nonsense, dear! I mean it! We have finished with crookedness."

Together they stole out of the gate, just as the butler had put the dessert on the table and left Mrs. Graham and her guests alone. Di did not know, but there were two people dining with the old lady that night—her granddaughter, who had made friends with her as John had prophesied Maisie would, and John.

"I can't help wondering where Di is now," John exclaimed, little dreaming how near she was to them.

"What I can't help wondering is what will become of her," said Maisie. "I am sure there must be good in her if only one could get to it. Nobody could be so lovely, and all bad. If only there was somebody, some man to take her in hand—someone hard and strong to love her and bully her, and really be her master—that, I am sure, is what Di wants!"

Di had it. But Maisie did not know.

Mrs. Graham did not speak. She was thinking about a little confidence her real granddaughter had whispered to her before dinner . . . something that concerned that hundred pounds John had been so anxious to pay back. Her hard old eyes were shining with an unusual tenderness. Everyone knows what grandmothers are, but great-grandmothers are worse!

If you liked "Born To Be Bad" you will like "Should A Bride Forgive" even more. "Should A Bride Forgive?" begins this week on page 3. Start reading it right away.

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